



LIGHTS OUT LAURIER

The world celebrates Earth Hour, a vote for the environment ... **PAGE 7**

SEEING STARRS

Comparing our students' union's hiring practice with other campuses ... **PAGES 14-15**

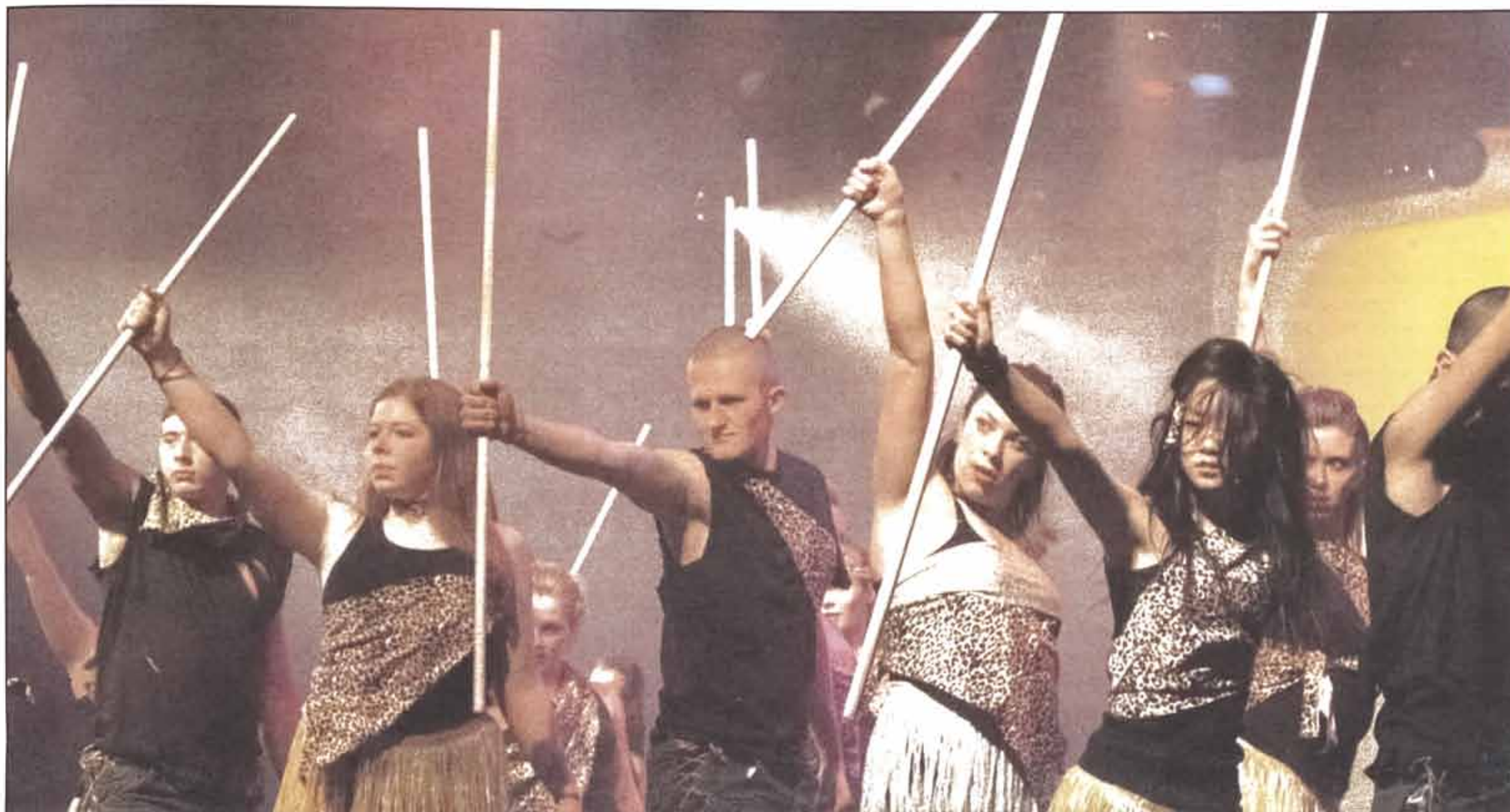
CASH GRAB

Will Main argues against being guided by money ... **PAGE 24**

Volume 49 Issue 27

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009

www.cordweekly.com



LYLA WILSON

Fashion 'N Motion takes a stand

The Cord reviews Laurier's favourite annual dance event ... **PAGE 27**

Hawks claim silver at national finals

For the second year in a row, the Golden Hawks fall in the final game to the McGill Martlets

LAUREN MILLET
SPORTS EDITOR

ANTIGONISH, N.S. - In a rematch of last year's championship game, the Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks faced off against the McGill Martlets in a quest for the gold medal on Sunday night at the Keating Millennium Centre in Nova Scotia.

Having been almost error-free throughout the tournament, the giant Martlets had easily disposed of hosts St. Francis Xavier 5-1 on Saturday night to gain a berth to the final.

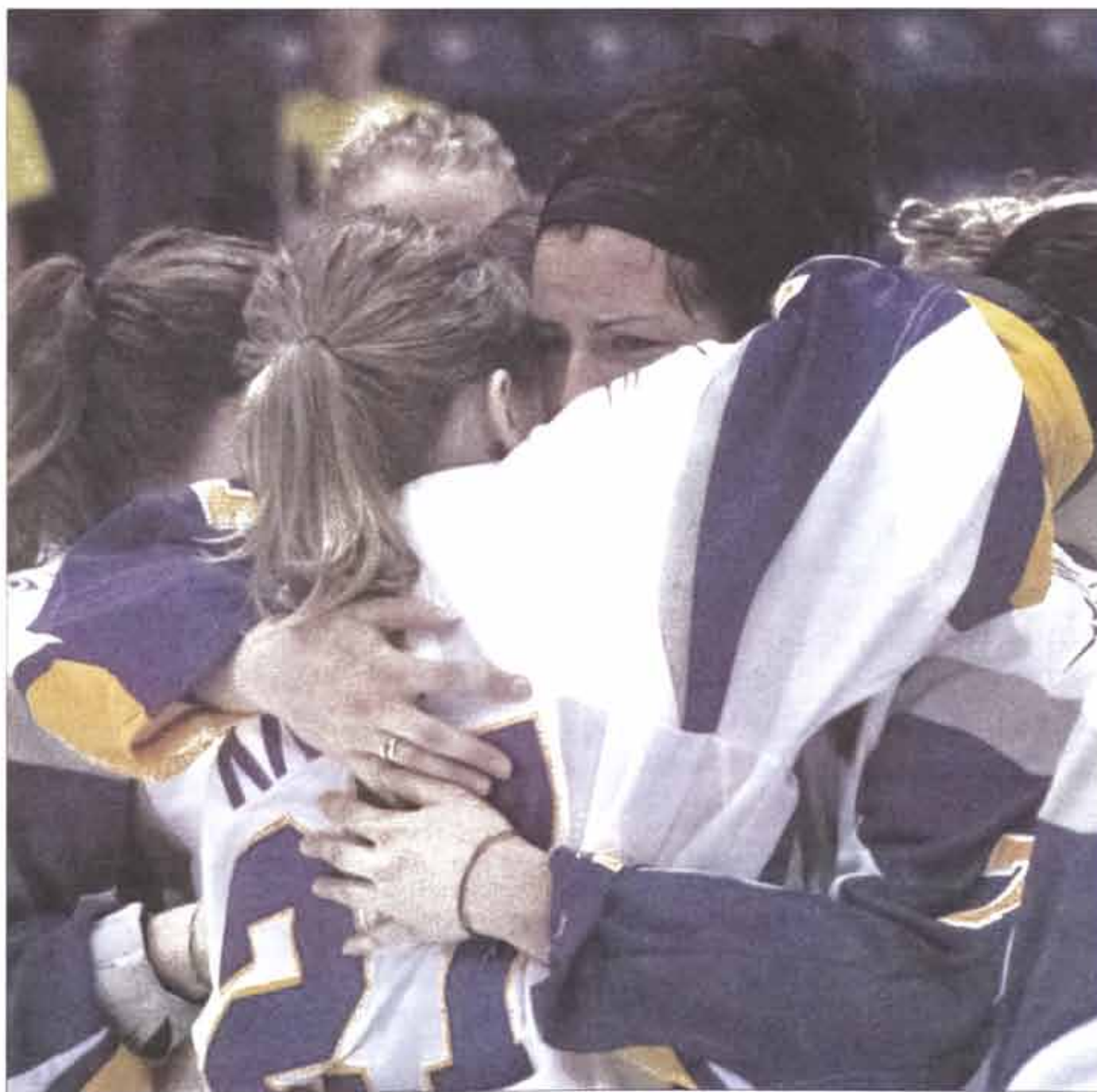
The Hawks were coming in fresh off surviving a 5-3 come-back attempt from Moncton and, after falling 2-0 to the Martlets last year, WLU was out for revenge this time.

It wasn't to be, however, for the Hawks fell 3-1 to a better, faster

"We were pretty sure it was going to be tighter, maybe a one-goal game, or possibly overtime," said Head Coach Rick Osborne.

Osborne continued, mentioning the difference between this year's final and last year's, saying that they really thought they were ready to make a good run at the gold medal this year. "One was, we thought they were a better team, but we thought our two rookies this year made us a much faster team.

"The other thing was we didn't feel anything like we did last year [in the final]. The game against Alberta [last year] was mentally and physically exhausting and even though we thought we were ready to play the next night, boy did it take a toll on us."



RYAN STEWART

- SEE HOCKEY, PAGE 13

SILVER HAWKS - Liz Knox and Lauren Barch share an emotional embrace after their loss in the final game.

THE CORD WEEKLY

- The tie that binds since 1926 -

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2009

VOLUME 49 ISSUE 27

Next Issue: April 1

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Really? You and Dave should be friends ... and Rebecca!"

- Graphics Editor Julie Marion after mistaking Graphics Volunteer Matt English for a Jew.

WORD OF THE WEEK

bilk - To defraud, cheat or swindle.

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COLOPHON

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Preamble to The Cord Constitution

The Cord will keep faith with its readers by presenting news and expressions of opinions comprehensively, accurately and fairly.

The Cord believes in a balanced and impartial presentation of all relevant facts in a news report, and of all substantial opinions in a matter of controversy.

The staff of The Cord shall uphold all commonly held ethical conventions of journalism. When an error of omission or of commission has occurred, that error shall be acknowledged promptly.

When statements are made that are critical of an individual, or an organization, we shall give those affected the opportunity to reply at the earliest time possible.

Ethical journalism requires impartiality, and consequently conflict of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest will be avoided by all staff.

The only limits of any newspaper are those of the world around it, and so The Cord will attempt to cover its world with a special focus on Wilfrid Laurier University, and the community of Kitchener-Waterloo, and with a special ear to the concerns of the students of Wilfrid Laurier University. Ultimately, The Cord will be bound by neither philosophy, nor geography in its mandate.

The Cord has an obligation to foster freedom of the press and freedom of speech. This obligation is best fulfilled when debate and dissent are encouraged, both in the internal workings of the paper, and through The Cord's contact with the student body.

The Cord will always attempt to do what is right, with fear of neither repercussions, nor retaliation. The purpose of the student press is to act as an agent of social awareness, and so shall conduct the affairs of our newspapers.

Board expands green policy

Students' union management is now required to consider the environmental impact of all decisions and capital spending

REBECCA VASLUIANU
NEWS EDITOR

The students' union board of directors passed two amendments on executive limitations, which will increase the scope and strength of the union's environmental policies.

"This is one of the handful of times in my almost 11 years working in the students' union that the [board] has done something that will so fundamentally change the way the union operates in the future," said Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU) General Manager Michael McMahon, who stood up and applauded after the motions passed.

Both changes to previously existing executive limitations – policies mandating the president to follow specific actions or guidelines – were raised by Director Griffin Carpenter.

The first amendment approved was to WLUSU's asset protection policy, adding that the president may not make any capital purchases within the union "without first assessing the environmental impact" of the acquisition.

Carpenter explained that capital purchases include things such as computers, new vehicles and even the marble hawk in the floor at the Hall of Fame.

"From now on, the president will have to report to the board, stating each capital purchase, what the environmental assessment is, and some comparable alternatives to that capital purchase so we can see that there was environmental criteria in mind when they made the decision," said Carpenter.

The next amendment that the

board accepted mandates the president not to "operate without following a plan that details how the WLUSU will minimize its environmental impact" with respect to a variety of areas. The president is also obligated to operate "following a plan that details how the WLUSU will lobby and advocate" for environmental issues.

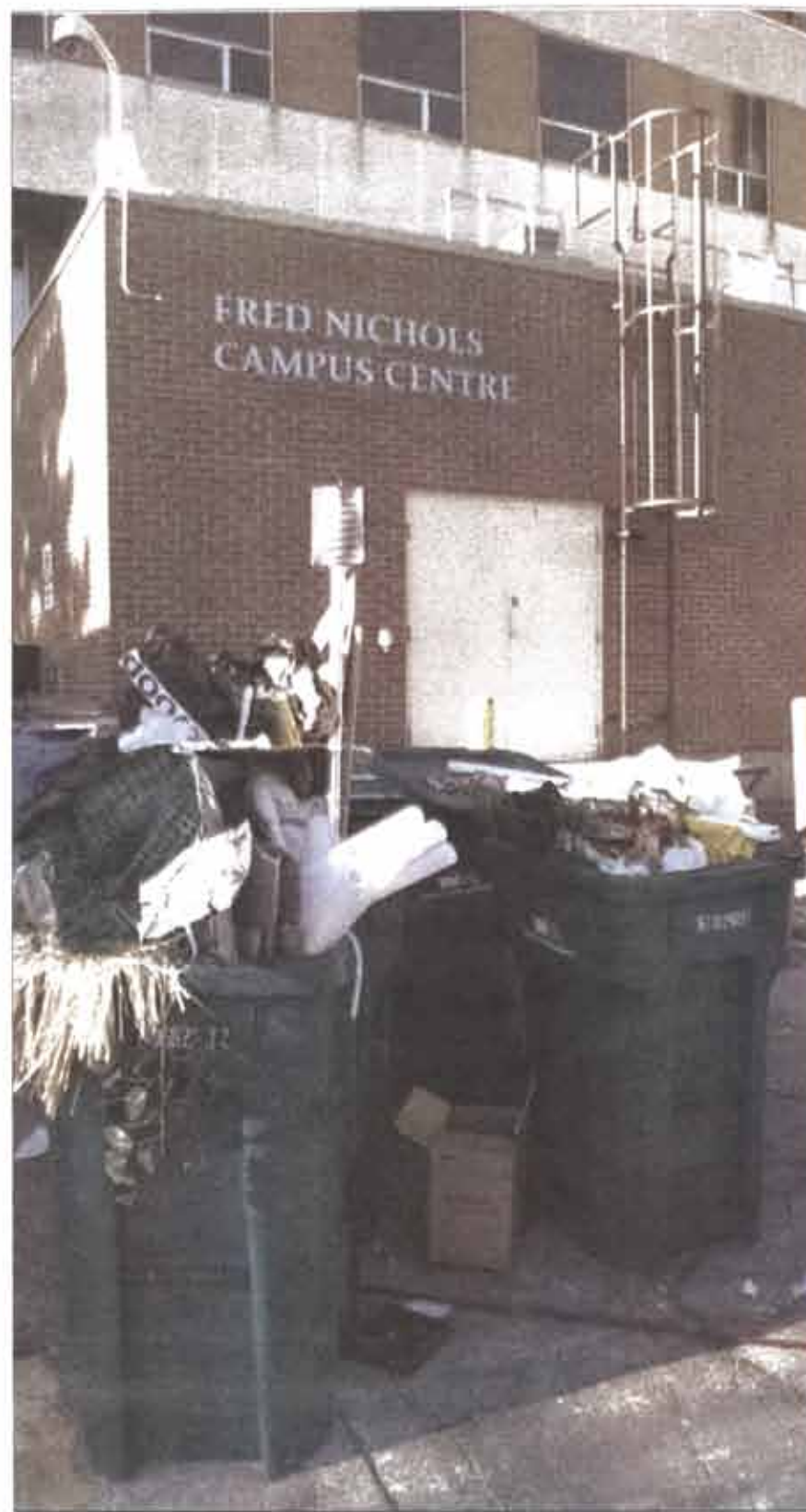
Another aspect added to the executive limitation requires the president to "conduct a comprehensive annual environmental audit" of union operations using criteria such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), a system used to rate projects for sustainability practices.

"Right now there's just a whole bunch of questions we don't know about WLUSU's impact on the environment and, without an audit, we don't have that information because we're not experts," said Carpenter, adding that, much like a financial audit creates an avenue for accountability, an environmental audit would help hold WLUSU accountable on environmental issues.

McMahon explained that the broad nature of the executive limitations will allow them to be especially effective.

"The board has chosen the disciplined approach of the governance model to make policy that is not limited to one product or one flavour-of-the-day sustainability venture," he said, adding that this will challenge the union "to look at every decision that it makes when conducting business and be sustainable all the time."

Carpenter told *The Cord* that he believes these policies will give decision-makers within the



ALEX HAYTER

WASTE - One-time-use props from a students' union event await pickup for disposal outside of the Fred Nichols Campus Centre.

union the needed push towards becoming more environmentally sustainable.

"Some of the decision-makers in the union do care about environmentalism, but they have a number of other constraints on them in terms of their time and resources,"

he explained.

"Now that the board has come on side too and said this is actually a priority of all students, it requires them to spend more of their time on these issues."

University's upcoming budget delayed by two months

Cuts to budget will occur later than September according to VP: Finance Jim Butler

REBECCA VASLUIANU
NEWS EDITOR

As the state of the global economic market remains bleak, evaluation and planning concerning budget cuts at Laurier are still in progress.

The university's budget must be cut by a total of six percent, with individual departments seeing cuts of approximately five to six percent.

Budget managers have already proposed specific cuts within their own departments and the university is currently assessing these individual plans for integration into the WLU budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

While the budget is usually unveiled and approved annually in April, it is being delayed until June

this year.

VP: Finance and Administration Jim Butler explains that the delay is occurring for two reasons.

"WE WANT TO MAKE SURE WHEN WE GO ABOUT CUTTING LIKE THIS THAT WE GET IT AS RIGHT AS WE CAN."

**-Jim Butler,
VP: Finance and Administration**

The first is that Ontario's provincial budget is being presented by Provincial Finance Minister Dwight Duncan this Thursday; Butler explained that the university needs time to carefully consider the implications of it and take

them into account when drafting the budget.

Butler also told *The Cord* that the university wants to do the best possible job considering the implementation of cuts, and that this requires extra time.

"We want to make sure when we go about cutting like this that we get it as right as we can," he said.

The university's budget will actually be cast sometime in May; however, it must go through several channels including the President's Group and Senate for advice and finally the Board of Governors

for approval, which is why it will be finalized in June.

Butler explained that the delay in the budget will mean that the university cannot put the cuts in place at the beginning of September, stating, "It's going to have to occur later in the year."

Laurier's forecast for cuts was based on the worst-case scenario of a minus 13 percent rate of return on WLU's investments. While the markets have fallen further and the rate of return has decreased, the six-percent cut for the next fiscal year will not change.

"It might have to be increased later, but we're sticking with that for now," said Butler.

VOCAL CORD

Are you taking part in Earth Hour on Saturday?



"I don't know. I imagine I would."

— **Brandon Ransom**
Second-year music



"No, I haven't even heard of it."

— **Alex Lindsay**
First-year business



"Yes I will be. It's a great cause. I try to do my part to save the environment."

— **Ansaar Maharaj**
Fourth-year psychology



"Yeah, I would participate. We're at a time where we need to conserve energy with the recession and all."

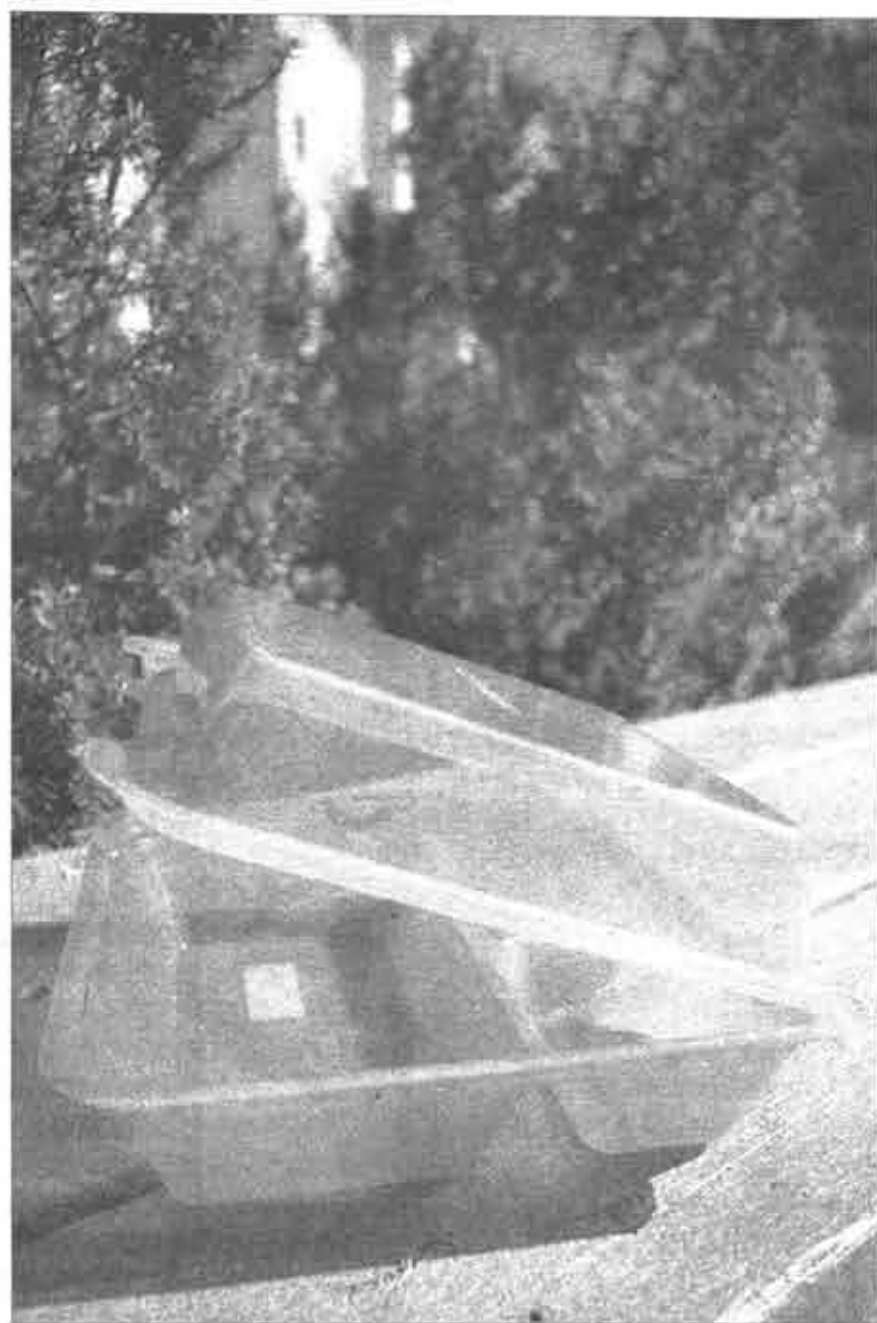
— **Brittaneigh Stickle**
Second-year French



"Yes, I will because I've taken a lot of global studies courses and I know that it's important."

— **Kyle Simons**
Third-year history

Compiled by Rebecca Vasluianu.
Photos by Laura Tomkins.



ALEX HAYTER

TO GO - Ten reusable take-out containers like this one will be introduced on campus as a pilot project next week.

Reusable takeout containers coming to Dining Hall

MORGAN ALAN
STAFF WRITER

Starting in September, the Fresh Food Company will introduce reusable takeout containers for use in the Dining Hall.

The program will initially be introduced to first-year students for the upcoming school year. Each student will pay a fee for a key-tab, which they will exchange for a container when takeout food is received.

Once used, the containers will be returned to the Dining Hall, where they will be washed and re-used.

According to Dan Dawson, general manager of student services, concerns over how the containers would be cleaned has hindered their implementation.

"There is a significant concern about having students come in with a container that may not have been washed properly," said Dawson.

The Fresh Food Company has previously worked with the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU) and the Eco-hawks to gather input on environmentally sound practices.

Over the past two years, the Dining Hall has introduced a compost system for food waste and replaced Styrofoam takeout containers with biodegradable paper containers.

"We're trying to be proactive with environmental sustainability ... we realize the importance

of switching from a Styrofoam or paper-based product to a reusable one," said Ryan Lloyd-Craig, director of Food Services.

The containers will be introduced to roughly 1,000 students in September, with the rest of the student body receiving the containers gradually.

"[The program] won't completely eliminate the need for disposable containers, but if we can change our customer behaviour, it'll be better overall," said Dawson.

"Laurier students have become very high consumers of take-out containers ... we're wasting a lot of money and resources on them," he added.

The motivation behind the project is, however, not purely financial.

"We're not looking at this as a financial impact. We're looking from an environmental viewpoint," Lloyd-Craig said.

He noted that the new containers cost significantly more than the current paper containers, and will require additional labour costs for washing.

The program will not be launched at the WLUSU-owned Terrace in September, as the facility lacks an industrial washing system.

A pilot project of the program will be launched next week, as the containers are given to ten individuals to test their wide-scale viability.

Steve Farlow meets with PM

Following roundtable, Harper pledges \$10 million to youth entrepreneurship foundation

LINDA GIVETASH
STAFF WRITER

Steve Farlow, executive director at the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship, participated in a roundtable discussion with Prime Minister Stephen Harper on March 18. The discussion focused on student entrepreneurship, the role of universities and how they are a solution to the current economic crisis.

Farlow, who also sits on the board of directors and mentors at the Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF), explained that his diverse roles with the CYBF and the university led him to the opportunity to participate in a discussion with the prime minister.

Eight recently graduated entrepreneurs whose successful businesses were launched with the support of CYBF loans include Harry Chemko, Saskia Stille, David Schnare, Colin Davison, Chad Fischl, Axel Arvizu, Ken LeBlanc and Jean-François Veillieux.

At the roundtable, they all presented their businesses and discussed their experiences of being young entrepreneurs in the current economy.

Chemko is CEO of Vancouver-based company Elastic Path Software Inc., which offers e-commerce and software solutions for online retail sites. The company took off when Aeroplan became their first major customer in 2003. Since then, Elastic Path Software has expanded, with a total of 92 employees and \$9 million in revenue last year.

"I THINK THIS IS JUST A STARTING POINT FOR [HARPER]. HE INDICATED THE NEXT STEP FOR HIM WAS A MORE NATIONAL STRATEGY TO DO MORE OF THIS."

— **Steve Farlow, executive director of the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship**

The English School of Canada, based in Toronto, is co-founded by Saskia Stille. The business offers English classes as well as innovative conversation group sessions and resumé workshops.

Not only is The English School creating jobs as it expands, but it is also helping new immigrants become employable in the Cana-

dian economy.

Farlow was exceedingly impressed by the interest Prime Minister Harper took in the businesses.

"The best part of this was how engaged the prime minister was," said Farlow. "He asked questions to each of them."

Farlow explained that universities have a major role in promoting entrepreneurship.

"Where universities are relevant, like Laurier, is we offer students right within the curriculum the opportunity to create new businesses," he stated.

Business students at WLU can receive a credit by bringing in their business model to the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship, explained Farlow. The model is then assessed in the first semester and launched in the second.

WLU, as a community partner of the CYBF, also has the ability to pre-approve businesses for a loan, he added.

"Virtually every business we create here at this university goes on to become a CYBF-funded business," said Farlow.

"The universities are a funnel at identifying these bright young people who have in their DNA the drive to own, operate and build a business."

WLU graduates to receive CYBF funding include Mike Morrice of Sustainable Waterloo and Paul Maxwell of Maxwell's Music House.

Following the roundtable, the prime minister announced that he would be investing \$10 million into the CYBF. With \$15,000 loans

distributed to each youth business, this translates to an additional 600 entrepreneurs who will have the opportunity to support their new businesses.

"I think this is just a starting point for him.

He indicated the next step for him was a more national strategy to do more of this," said Farlow. "He made it clear to us that this is a model for the future."

With hopes of further investment in youth entrepreneurship, a sense of optimism can be found within today's economy.

CORD/ONLINE

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> News

GSA annual general meeting next Tuesday

Three seats vacant, three acclaimed, reports News Editor
Jeremy Tremblay.

Enrolment to increase five percent

While applications to Laurier have dropped to 23,000 this year, the university expects to easily fill its undergraduate spots

LINDA GIVETASH
STAFF WRITER

Despite the current state of the economy, university enrolment remains stable. Wilfrid Laurier University projects 3,060 first-year undergraduate students will enrol at the Waterloo campus and 730 students at the Brantford campus for September 2009.

While enrolment is consistent, a slow-down in applications – in part a result of the economic crisis – has become apparent. This reflects students making the economical choice of staying close to home. More specifically, this means looking towards schools with GO transit access, allowing for an easy commute from the GTA.

At the Waterloo campus, enrolment projections reflect 100 more expected first-year students in comparison to the 2008-2009 school year. Despite the slight drop in applicants, the 23,000 high school students who have applied will guarantee the spots will be filled and ensure growth of 5 percent.

Glennice Snyder, manager of student recruitment, attributed WLU's continuing success to the community. "We bring in business, there are jobs, we bring in people. It's a great area for people to come to, to live and to work and therefore they come to school here as well."

The turnout for Laurier Day, Friday March 20, reflected the interest in the university. Over 1,600 visitors received tours and a total of 3,300 students registered for the day's events, both numbers exceeding previous years' records.

Brian Foley, a 17-year-old student from Hamilton applying to the BBA program, explained, "I like how friendly everyone is."

Pickering student Deanna Norlock showed interest in later visiting the Brantford campus as, "The concurrent education program looked interesting to me."

For students unable to attend Laurier Day or book campus tours throughout the year, there are more opportunities than ever before to see the campus without physically visiting. Budget cuts that have hit the Student Recruitment Office have arrived simultaneously with web innovations.

Printing costs for information packages and communication between the on e-mail communications.

Information packages are now available for students to download in PDF formats. Advertisements on Facebook have also proved to be "inexpensive and very effective," said Snyder.

Virtual tours of the university can be taken on the WLU website. Lectures have also been recorded and are available to watch on YouTube, giving high school students the opportunity to experience a university class.

Snyder explained, "We're ready to say that it's not always about paper, and that's not how students communicate anyway."

Long-term enrolment may be a cause for concern. "Demographically, in the next five to ten years, the GTA is the only area in Canada that will be growing," said Snyder.

However, changing demographics will not have an effect on enrolment in the immediate future, in which sustainability if not slight growth is expected.

Some universities have begun to increase retention efforts to help keep the students that they spent money on recruiting. On March 9, Carleton University announced their program promoting retention and a "culture of success." The program, Carleton Complete, will monitor students' success, particularly first-year students, and offer assistance to at-risk students to promote their progress towards graduation.



NICK LACHANCE

ON DISPLAY - 3,300 visitors signed up for Laurier Day events and 1,600 individuals received tours.

Brantford Campus Centre construction to begin in Spring

The building, which will be downsized from its original design, will not include the planned dining hall or residence

MORGAN ALAN
STAFF WRITER

After facing delays in January, construction on the campus centre at Laurier Brantford will begin this spring. The centre was originally planned to include a bookstore, office space, classrooms, a dining hall and residence space.

After the project went over its \$20 million dollar budget twice, it was scaled back and the dining hall and residence space were removed.

Laurier Brantford has appealed to the federal government to finance a larger building. If this funding does not come through, the project will go ahead in a reduced capacity.

"Most of the groundwork has been done; it's a question of what the building is going to look like," said Bruce Arai, campus principal and acting vice president.

The dining hall and residence space will not be included in the final project with or without federal funding, and will instead be integrated into future public-private partnership facilities.

"The private sector can fund residence and food operations because there are revenue streams attached to them. It's difficult to get the private sector to build you a classroom," said Arai.

The exclusion of the dining hall, which was to be built and oper-

ated by the students' union, has led some to question the level of service being provided for Brantford students.

"IT'S TOUGH TO LIVE AS A STUDENT IF YOU DON'T HAVE A PLACE TO GO TO GET THOSE STAPLES."

-Mike McMahon, WLUSU general manager

"The dining hall for Brantford students has to be a priority ... [WLUSU] is surprised it hasn't been a bigger issue," said Mike McMahon, general manager of WLUSU.

McMahon noted that, when

compared to the services operated in Waterloo, Brantford's services are relatively limited.

"It's tough to live as a student if you don't have a place to go to get those staples," he said.

According to Arai, the current economic climate makes infrastructure a positive

investment.

"It's a good way to expand our facilities, which will have an overall positive impact on the university budget," he said.

However, Arai questioned what

impact such a specific focus will have on the overall operation of the university.

"We're able to expand our buildings, but our operating budget hasn't improved. It's a contradictory position to be in," he said.

Though the campus centre may affect Brantford exclusively, Arai stressed that the issue impacts the entire Laurier community.

"The troubles [Laurier Waterloo] faces are being faced by Brantford as well," said Arai. "Brantford is a net revenue contributor to the university. The more expansion we see in Brantford, the better off overall the university will be," he added.

BAG O' CRIME**INJURED / SICK PERSON**

Reported: March 16, 2009

Emergency Response Team (ERT) and special constables responded to a residence regarding a female who had hit her head on a bookshelf.

THEFT UNDER \$5000

Reported: March 17, 2009

A University of Waterloo student reported that his shoes, keys and sweater were stolen while left unattended for three and a half hours on Alumni Field.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Reported: March 17, 2009

A residence don reported that several males were trying to enter the building through a basement window.

DRUGS

Reported: March 17, 2009

2.8 g of marijuana and some drug paraphernalia were confiscated from a student who had been found smoking marijuana in his room. The drugs and paraphernalia are to be destroyed.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Reported: March 18, 2009

Several bricks from a planter in the Quad were found to be removed and thrown about the area. PP&P were contacted regarding repairs.

BREAK AND ENTER

Reported: March 18, 2009

Two students were found by Residence Life dons attempting to break in to another student's bedroom at a residence. An investigation by Special Constables determined that the two suspects were attempting to enter the bedroom to find out if the resident of that room had stolen money and drugs from them.

INJURED PERSON

Reported: March 19, 2009

A student injured their hand in

an attempt to gain access to a fire extinguisher at a residence. The fire extinguisher was needed, as the same student had left a pan of oil unattended on the stove. Emergency Medical Services and Waterloo Fire Department also attended.

INJURED / SICK PERSON

Reported: March 19, 2009

Special constables and ERT attended the stadium regarding two males who had suffered minor injuries after colliding in a flag football game.

THEFT UNDER \$5000

Reported: March 20, 2009

A fire extinguisher was reported stolen from Bouckaert Hall. The extinguisher was from the first floor, and appeared to have been sprayed in the lounge area.

INTOXICATED PERSON

Reported: March 21, 2009

A male WLU student was found sleeping in the Dining Hall. He showed signs of intoxication once he was woken up. The student was offered, but refused, a ride home.

ALARM

Reported: March 22, 2009

A hot water pipe burst in the Aird Building, causing considerable damage to several offices. Waterloo Fire Department attended because the fire alarm sounded.

PROPERTY DAMAGE

Reported: March 22, 2009

The front doors to University Stadium were found smashed by persons unknown. Entry to the building was not gained.

If you have any information regarding these or any other incidents please call Special Constable Service at 519-885-3333 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS. You can also report a crime electronically through the Special Constable Service website. The Bag O' Crime is submitted by WLU Special Constable Service.

Students' union will tackle study space

REBECCA VASLUIANU
NEWS EDITOR

A motion passed by the students' union board of directors (BOD) last Friday has mandated the union to lobby for increased student study space on campus.

Director Griffin Carpenter, who co-wrote the motion with Director Michael Lockhart, explained that it was the result of overwhelming student concern around the issue on campus.

Last year's winter term saw a decrease in hours of access to the Science Building; increasing

study space has become a key issue ever since, in particular during 2009's students' union presidential election.

"It's important because there's a number of resources that are only available on campus," said Carpenter.

Specific computer programs, as well as venues for peer learning, are just a few of these resources. Increased access to study spaces would also have implications for safety on campus, as students would be able to travel through buildings at night instead of outside.

Carpenter told *The Cord* that stu-

dents' union President Colin LeFevre along with BOD Chair Asif Bacchus plan to speak with deans at WLU in the next few weeks to possibly have study space increased in time for spring-term exams.

He added that it is a common misconception regarding the limits of the BOD's power to create change on campus.

"There is no limit to what the BOD can get other people to do. We can't do anything personally on the issue, but we set direction," Carpenter explained.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Concordia student stops school-bombing

MONTREAL — J.P. Neufeld, a fine arts student at Concordia university, has gained international attention for foiling a British teen's plot to bomb a high school.

On March 17, Neufeld found posts on a message board in which a student threatened to bomb his high school later that day.

"Most school shooters have put something online, whether they're bragging or they want to be caught," Neufeld said. "I kept that in mind and thought: 'Hey, I actually have the chance to maybe prevent something here.'"

He called local police in Norfolk, England, who arrested a 16-year-old male on his way to class with flammable materials.

Saskatchewan loses tuition freeze

SASKATOON — On March 16, the Saskatchewan government announced that it will not enforce a tuition freeze at the province's universities for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The province has said tuition increases will be capped at 3 percent, though it has not announced how it will enforce the cap. Ontario has had an increase cap of 5 percent annually since 2006.

Manitoba is now the last Western province with a tuition freeze, though some question whether or not it will remain in the province's March 25 budget.

Governments in British Columbia and Alberta ended their provinces' tuition freezes in 2002 and 2005, respectively.

Students vote to end sales of bottled water

WINNIPEG — Approximately 75 percent of students at the University of Winnipeg voted to ban all bottled water sales on campus in a referendum held last week.

The university will be the first in Canada to phase out bottled water.

Over the next several months, the university will gradually eliminate the product from campus dining venues and vending machines.

At the same time, the university will increase the number of drinking fountains on campus and hand out reusable water bottles to first-year students to use.

The university previously sold approximately 38,000 bottles of water per year.

— *Compiled by Jeremy Tremblay and Rebecca Vasluianu with files from CUP.*

Laurier International Friendship Extension

Bringing international, exchange and Canadian students together at Laurier

L.I.F.E. is currently recruiting student volunteers for 2009/2010 to work with Laurier International as mentors and coordinators. As a mentor you will be an important part of the welcome and orientation process for incoming exchange and international students, starting at the end of the summer, continuing throughout the academic year.

L.I.F.E. is a great opportunity "globalize" your experience at Laurier and add to your Co-Curricular Record.

L.I.F.E. trains mentors and coordinators, matches them with incoming international and exchange students and facilitates social activities.

Applications are available now in the Laurier International Office, DAWB Room 1-101.

NEW SUBMISSION DATE

Applications are due Friday April 3.



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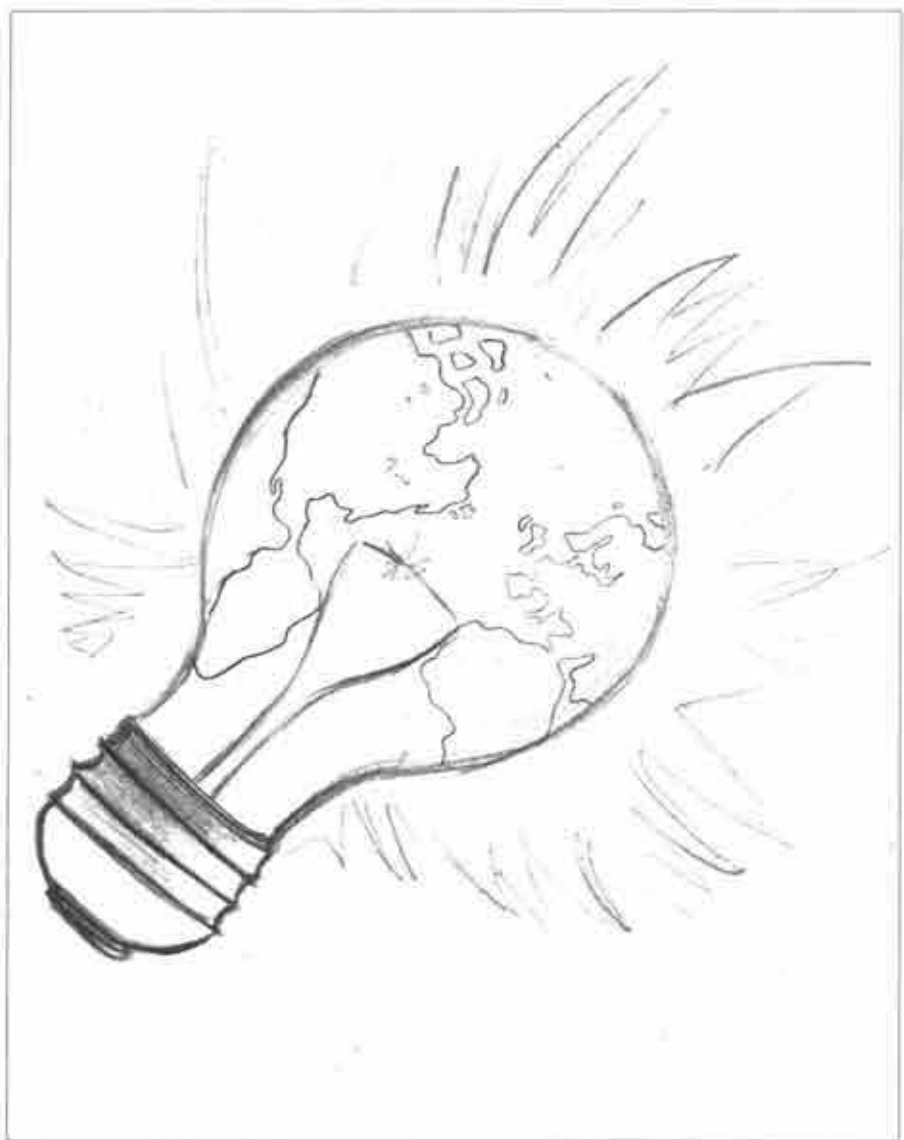
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Initiating Earth Hour



LIGHTS OUT - Millions are expected to participate in Earth Hour.

EcoHawks event

When: Saturday, March 28 at 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Where: Alumni Field

What: Free BBQ, drum circle, soccer and frisbee games

Why: To participate in Earth Hour 2009

Earth Hour is on Saturday from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. and WLU students will be showing their support

HEATHER MACDONALD
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR

An initiative that started in Sydney, Australia on March 31, 2007 with 2.2 million homes and businesses has now grown into a worldwide campaign. Regardless of time zone, on Saturday, March 28, 2009 at 8:30 p.m., over 80 countries will participate in Earth Hour — a campaign that encourages global support for action on climate change.

During the proposed hour of time, over 1,800 cities and approximately 23,000 businesses and organizations will turn off or dim any non-essential lights and unplug unnecessary appliances.

The theme this year is unity through voting. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF), organizer of Earth Hour, is promoting climate change awareness by stating that participation in Earth Hour is a vote for the planet and a vote against global warming. The WWF set a goal of 1 billion votes for the Earth.

Earth Hour will be taken into consideration at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) this December as a platform to initiate the potential signing of a successor to the Kyoto Protocol.

In 1992 the UNFCCC adopted

the Kyoto Protocol, encouraging the commitment of industrialized countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet, like any popularized initiative, there are cynics. Online bloggers have criticized the concept of Earth Hour because they don't feel the campaign is effective.

Many are rallying to stage an Anti-Earth Hour in which they turn on all their lights, raise air conditioners and heaters to maximum levels and leave refrigerator and freezer doors open for the entirety of the 60 minutes originally set aside by many to conserve as much energy as possible.

Although many believe it would make a powerful statement, President Barack Obama is currently undecided in regards to the stance the White House will take during Earth Hour.

The *Toronto Star* reported that negotiations with the WWF are still underway on whether or not the White House and other key monuments in Washington will dim their lights. WWF US spokesperson Dan Forman said that, with Earth Hour, there are "security concerns" for shutting off the lights at the White House.

Nevertheless, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon issued a state-

2007

2.2 million homes and businesses in Sydney, Australia

2008

35 countries, 370 cities, 50 million people participated

2009

Goal: 1,000 cities, 1 billion people

Currently: 84 countries, 2,712 cities, towns and municipalities, 27,118 businesses and organizations

ment in support of Earth Hour, saying that it "is a way for the citizens of the world to send a clear message." He believes the message conveys that "they want action on climate change."

Laurier has decided to take part in Earth Hour between 8 and 9 p.m. By shutting off exterior and interior lights throughout various buildings around campus, as well as shutting off lights at Alumni Field, Laurier will be casting its symbolic vote for Earth.

The EcoHawks will be working in co-operation with Laurier by holding an event on Saturday at Alumni Field. Co-ordinator Reyn O'Born described the event as intending to be "free-spirited."

See **PAGE 20** for editorial reaction to this story

Madagascar's youngest president

The African Union has suspended Madagascar due to its new presidency

HENJI MILIUS
STAFF WRITER

Andry Rajoelina, 34-year-old mayor of Antananarivo in Madagascar, former media entrepreneur and disc-jockey, was handed the control of the Malagasy government last Tuesday from a top-level military directorate who performed the transfer of power on behalf of former President Marc Ravalomanana.

"When he became mayor I had never heard of him before. But he was a charming person, he was easy to be around," said a former adviser to Rajoelina, who wished to remain anonymous, reported in *The Guardian*. "In fact, he seemed quite shy and very polite. I never believed he could become what he is today — now it is very hard to know who this man really is," he continued.

President Ravalomanana was recently ousted due to pressure to resign his political power by the army and street protests. Rajoelina won a majority in the first round of the 2006 election, but struggled with his first victory over the controver-

sial results of his December 2001 presidential election.

To his credit, the former president has improved the country's roads, education and health services, but has failed to do anything to address criticisms of the poverty-ridden nation.

Since January, Rajoelina and Ravalomanana's contention with each other did not go without notice. Rajoelina upped the ante against his political foe by capitalizing on public frustration to gain the control and support of the army by openly denouncing the former president as a "dictator" and asking him to resign.

CNN reported that Rajoelina set up a "parallel government and led massive street protests against his rival" and "promised to alleviate poverty on the island, where most people live under \$2 a day." Moreover, he would sell the \$60 million presidential jet to establish a hospital for the people's health because he believed that the former president "misused public funds," according to Al Jazeera.

On Thursday, Rajoelina stopped the parliament and held his first

cabinet meeting since taking power, reported BBC News.

He immediately interrupted "an agreement Ravalomanana took with South Korean corporation Daewoo to lease more than a million hectares of land to grow food crops," learned Al Jazeera.

Monja Roindefo, newly appointed prime minister of Madagascar, announced he would hold an election within the next two years, and would amend the constitution that outlaws any candidate under 40 years of age from taking office.

Right now, Rajoelina's accession to power is questioned by the African Union (AU), the Southern African Development Community and the International Community.

The AU said that "the handover in Madagascar was not a straightforward military seizure of power because it had not been constitutional," reported BBC News.

The Southern African Development Community, of which Madagascar is a member, claim that Rajoelina's seizure of power was illegal and unconstitutional.

Thus, sanctions have fallen on



YOUNGIN' - Rajoelina: criticized by the international community.

Madagascar's current government. The AU has suspended Madagascar's membership to the organization as well as any other country where unconstitutional means have been used to overthrow their government, such as Guinea and

Mauritania. Also, after a closed-door meeting on the issue with the AU Peace and Security Council, Chairman Bruno Nongoma Zidouemba said that "Rajoelina had a time frame of six months to hold a general election."

Kielburger addresses Laurier

CEO of Free the Children Marc Kielburger spoke about his experience working as a humanitarian in developing countries

ALANNA WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

Last Saturday, a large audience gathered in the Athletic Complex to witness Marc Kielburger speak at the Global City Partnership's event. Over three hours long, the night opened with escape artist Scott Hammel and closed with music by Vacuity.

Kielburger, CEO of Free the Children and Harvard and Oxford Law graduate, addressed the audience about his experiences with humanitarianism, current world issues and the legacy each of us wants to leave. Money raised at the event went to Free the Children's development project in Sierra Leone.

Free the Children is a charity that was created in 1995 by Kielburger's brother, Craig, after his visit to Pakistan to investigate child labour when he was just 12 years old.

It is now the world's largest network of young people helping young people.

Like his brother, Marc Kielburger also has world travel experience, having visited Thailand in his first year of university.

Kielburger addressed the audience about his first humanitarian trip, working on his first day as a volunteer in an AIDS ward in the slums of Thailand.

He witnessed a man die in front of him, describing it as "an incredibly important perspective-taking moment."

He added further, having seen many people perish in his line of work, "You think about what was important to you five minutes ago and what will be important five

minutes hence."

Kielburger claims that he was "able to learn theory in school but the practice in the slums," and promised himself after his year-long trip to Thailand that he would really work to educate himself to help promote development.

Kielburger's moving speech passed from his early experiences working as a volunteer to explaining his leadership role at Free the Children and later writing books like *Me to We* and working with the Oprah Angel Network to send students on volunteer trips abroad.

Kielburger touched on current issues connected with Free the Children, like child labour, HIV/AIDS, global warming, declining global life expectancy and problems with international aid.

His speech was hopeful but was not lacking in criticism for ancient aid regimes that are in need of reform, according to Kielburger.

At the end of his speech Kielburger showed the audience the village of Kono, Sierra Leone, where Free the Children is working to rebuild schools and provide teachers with schooling, among other development-related projects that are needed as a result of the 11-year civil war, which ended in 2003.

"Young people have always been involved in any social justice movement of our time," Kielburger expressed to the audience.

He suggested working for Free the Children or other organizations that promote development abroad. "Getting involved takes courage," he said, as he told countless stories of courage exhibited by individuals living in developing countries like

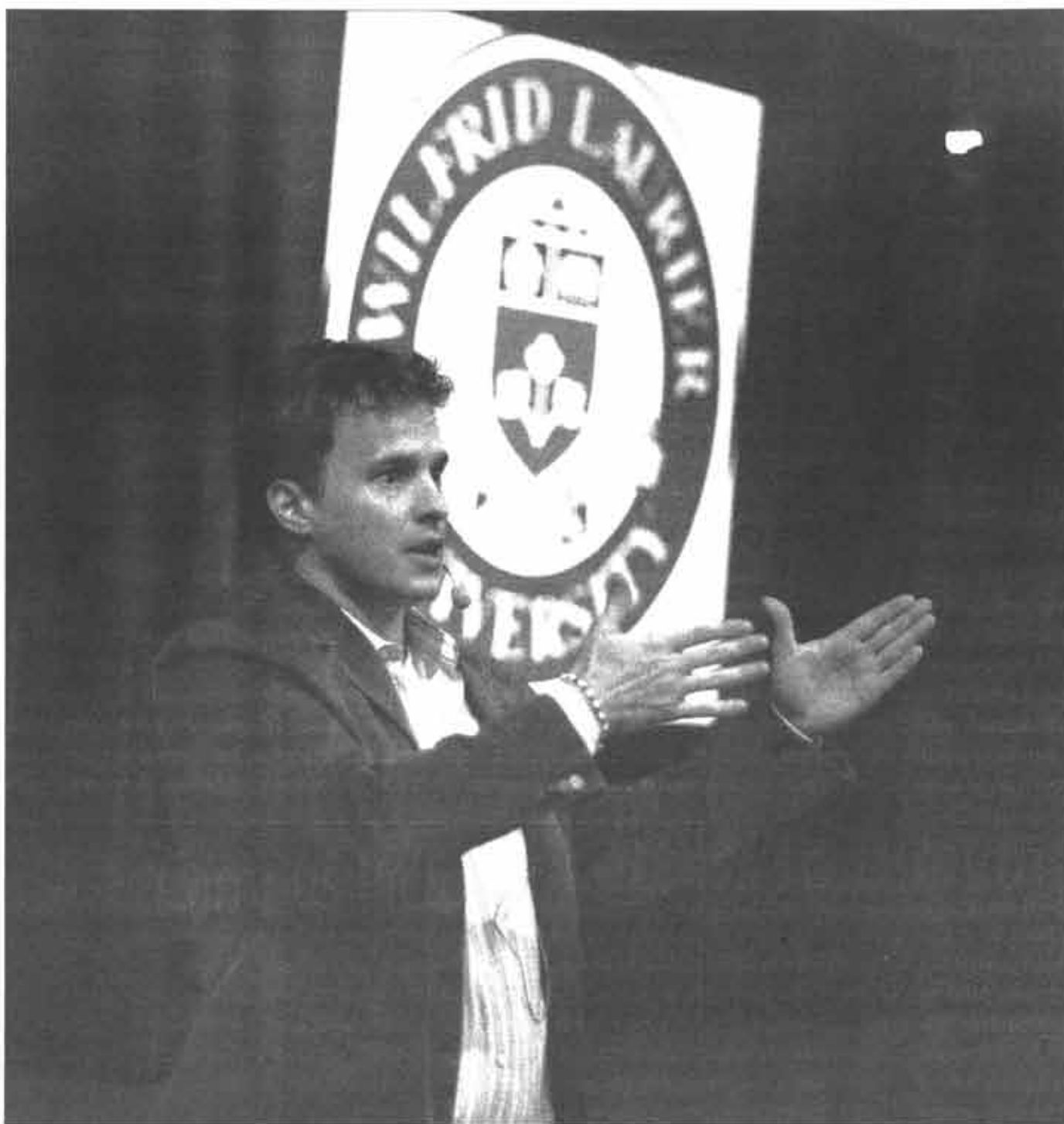
Kenya, Pakistan and Sierra Leone.

One of Kielburger's overarching themes was that each individual has the power to make a difference in the world, however small.

Kielburger said he once asked the Dalai Lama, "How do you know that each person can make a difference?"

The Dalai Lama replied, "If you're

not sure something small can make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito."



MICHELLE ATTARD

MAKING A DIFFERENCE - Last Saturday, Kielburger spoke at an event put on by the Global City Partnership.

WORLDINBRIEF

Reported bin Laden tape pressures elimination of Somali president

After a latency period of nearly eight months, Osama bin Laden strategically released an audio-taped address, just prior to Barack Obama's inauguration. Since this recording, the FBI's most wanted terrorist has released two additional tapes - the latest on Thursday, March 19. Such tapes serve as a reminder that despite ongoing international manhunts, bin Laden remains active and elusive.

CBC reported that the very latest eleven-minute-long tape, posted on a militant Islamic web forum, urged the overthrow of Somalia's new president Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed - a moderate Islamic leader. Somalia, a majority Muslim country, has not had a formally functioning central government since 1991. Instead, the tumultuous region has remained largely fragmented and controlled mainly by a plethora of ever-changing Islamic insurgents and militant groups.

As a result of a UN-brokered deal earlier this year, President Ahmed was elected to power upon promises he would instate Sharia law and ultimately unify the divided country. The voice on the tape is reportedly that of Osama bin Laden, but has yet to be officially confirmed. Despite this, BBC reported that both Somalia's leader and its information minister have issued statements strongly advising Osama bin Laden to refrain from any further interference in Somali affairs.

Two female American journalists held in custody in North Korea

Conflicting reports concerning the welfare of two American journalists have been swirling since their Tuesday, March 17 disappearance in an area close to the Chinese-North Korean border.

North Korean authorities neglected to confirm the detainment of the two female journalists until early Saturday.

The *Washington Post* reported that two journalists, now identified as Laura Ling and Euna Lee, were arrested by North Korean authorities along the Tumen River - a marker of the Chinese-North Korean border.

BBC reported that the two women, who are affiliated with a California-based Internet television station, were apparently investigating North Korean refugees in the northeastern region of China.

According to Reuters, North Korean authorities said the two Americans "illegally" entered the country by crossing the river and were promptly detained by border security guards.

On Saturday, North Korea's official news agency, Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), released a statement reiterating the same information and abstaining from any further comment, saying only that "a competent organ is now investigating the case."

The United States reaches out to Iran

"We will extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist."

Last week, American President Barack Obama appeared to be acting on his inaugural address promise to revamp American foreign policy.

On January 20, 2009 during his inaugural address, Obama spoke directly to the Middle East. "To the Muslim world," he said, "we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect."

Historically, America's relationship with the Middle East, including Iran, has not been simplistic by any means. In fact, the Iranian-American relationship has been on unsettled terms since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution.

As of late, tensions have only intensified as Iran has flaunted its nuclear capabilities. Nonetheless, according to the BBC, President Obama issued an address to the Iranian people, offering "a new beginning" in relations with Iran on Thursday.

On Saturday, Iran issued a response. Al Jazeera reported that Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei had appeared unfazed by the latest gesture from the new American leadership, stating, "They chant the slogan of change but no change is seen in practice. We haven't seen any change." Khamenei pressed further, "We will watch and we will judge. You change, our behaviour will change."

- Compiled by Paula Millar

Condom controversy

Pope Benedict XVI condemns the use of condoms during his trip to Africa



ALANNA WALLACE
STAFF WRITER

Last week during Pope Benedict XVI's week-long trip to Africa, which began in Cameroon, he drew controversy for his stance on condom use and the spread of HIV. Pope Benedict, who claimed he wishes to wrap his arms around the entire continent of Africa, according to the BBC, with "its painful wounds, its enormous potential and hopes," said that the solution to the HIV epidemic is "spiritual and human awakening" and "friendship for those who suffer."

"You can't resolve [HIV/AIDS] with the distribution of condoms," the pope claimed, "it increases the problem."

Knowledge regarding HIV/AIDS is limited in the most remote areas on the continent of Africa, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, whose HIV-positive numbers account for two-thirds of the global population infected with the virus, estimated at around 22 million. According to UNAIDS, 7,400 new HIV infections occur daily.

The only valuable point the pope has to offer here is that there needs to be an increase in education and understanding in order to stop the rampant discrimination and stigma that surrounds HIV. Other than that, according to my first-hand experience and any literature I have ever read on the subject (and the list is extensive), condoms are the only method available at the moment to stop the transmission of HIV. Hopefully in the future microbicides or a vaccine will be able to help curb the spread of the virus, but that is still no reason to denounce the use of condoms.

Thankfully, according to MSNBC, France's foreign ministry spokesman Eric Chevallier countered the pope's statements, claiming that, "Along with information, education and testing, the condom is a fundamental element of actions to

prevent transmission of the AIDS virus."

Further statements of the like were made by Germany and international institutions like UNAIDS. However, Vatican spokesman Rev. Federico Lombardi issued a claim reminding the international community that reliance on condoms can detract from effective sexual education. Meanwhile, Christine Boutin, a French government minister, issued the careless statement, "It is not fun to put on a condom when you make love."

As far as I am concerned, condom usage is an integral part of sexual education. There is no way to ensure abstinence for 100 percent of the global population, thus condoms are a necessity for curbing not only the transmission of HIV but also other STIs. The fact

that wearing or even talking about using condoms may be uncomfortable or "not fun," pales in comparison to the hell that millions of individuals around the world endure in their fight against HIV.

As Pope Benedict finishes his week-long tour of Africa, I can't help but think of the crowds he will address. Some say that the world cannot expect the pope to condone wearing a condom and I don't expect that he will turn away from a long history of Roman Catholic doctrine. However, claiming outright that condoms are not a means to save countless lives is simply untrue and will have a negative impact on the countless individuals - in Africa and across the world - who will unfortunately heed the pope's advice and not wear a condom the next time they have sex.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

POPE, BABY! - A baby attends mass wearing pope apparel.

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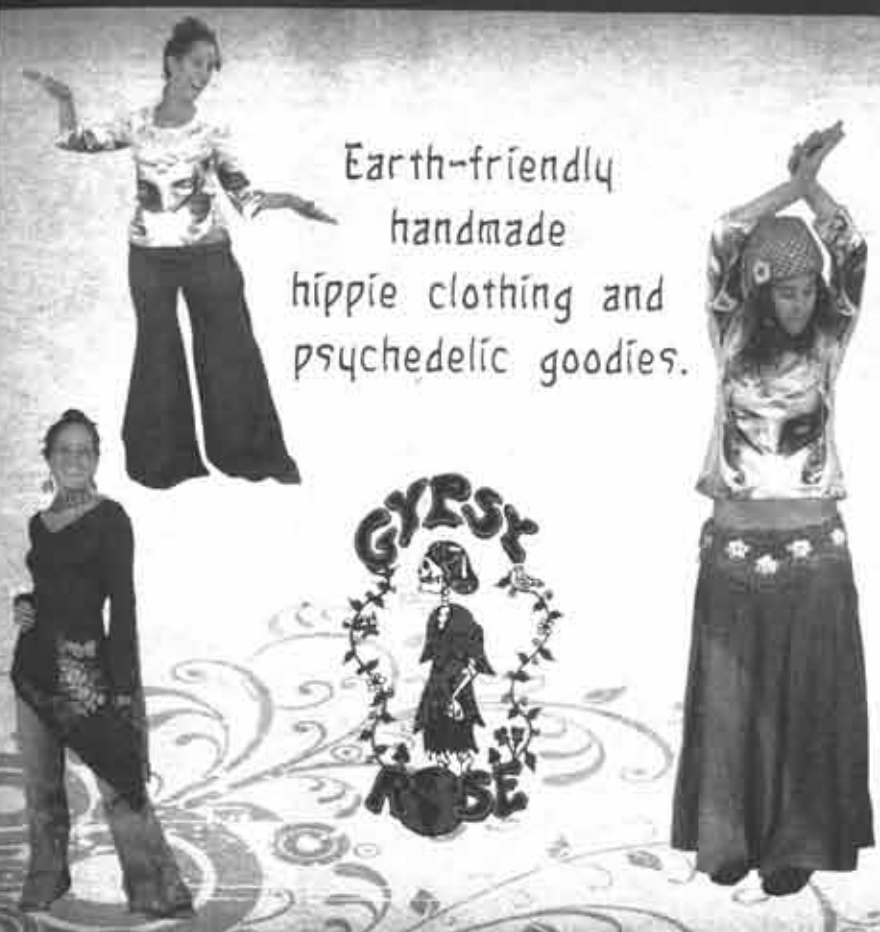
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SAM RICHES
STAFF WRITER

Don't miss: #4 Xavier vs. #1 Pittsburgh

On Thursday night the fourth-seeded Xavier Musketeers will take on the top-seeded Pittsburgh Panthers. Both teams won their first- and second- round matchups with double-digit leads, although Pittsburgh got off to a shaky start in their first game against East Tennessee State.

Xavier is a defensive powerhouse and has solid all-around play as a team. This is backed up by the fact that the Musketeers have one of the best field goal defence percentages in the nation. In contrast to this, the Panthers base their offensive attack heavily on the play of forward Sam Young. The six-foot-six scoring machine is on a tear right now, and may be the most talented forward remaining in the tournament. If the Musketeers defence can shut Young down, and prevent DeJuan Blair from camping out in the paint, they have a good chance to upset the top seed and move on to the next round.

Watch out for: Kalin Lucas, Michigan State

Six-foot guard Kalin Lucas has been the leader for the Michigan State Spartans all year. In their next matchup, the second-seeded Spartans will face the third-seeded Kansas Jayhawks. Watch for Lucas to step up in the biggest game of the season and prove himself as the leader of this Spartans team. After a close game with USC in the second round, the Spartans will be carrying that momentum into this matchup. Lucas has had two solid games so far, but he will need to have a huge game if he hopes to carry the Spartans into the next round of the tournament.



TREVOR SCHIEDEL
STAFF WRITER

Don't miss: #2 Oklahoma vs. #3 Syracuse

Both Oklahoma and Syracuse dominated their opposition in the first two rounds. Led by their guard play on offence and zone defence, Syracuse has saved their best basketball for the right time. Johnnie Flynn is one of the best lead guards in the country.

If he can get into the heart of Oklahoma's defence on Friday night, Eric Devendorf and Canada's own Andy Rautins can hurt the Sooners via the three-point shot.

Blake Griffin has shown why he will be the Player of the Year over this past weekend. In his first two games, Griffin averaged 30.5 points and 15 rebounds. With continued strong play from guards Willie Warren and Austin Johnson, Oklahoma can match the Orange's backcourt.

However, if the Sooners get into foul trouble, someone from their suspect bench, perhaps Ryan Wright from Mississippi State, will need to come up big.

Watch out for: Sam Young, Pittsburgh

There may be no more complete offensive player in the tournament. At 6'6", Young can shoot the three, get into the lane and draw fouls, and fly to the basket on the fast break. Young carried his team on Sunday against Oklahoma St. with 32 points and 8 rebounds.

Whenever Oklahoma St. went on a run in the first half of the game and seemed ready to blow the game open, Young responded with a big shot of his own to quiet the Cowboys. Look for Xavier to do all they can to keep Young in the Sweet 16 on Friday.



CHRIS BALUSCHAK
STAFF WRITER

Don't miss: #2 Duke vs. #3 Villanova

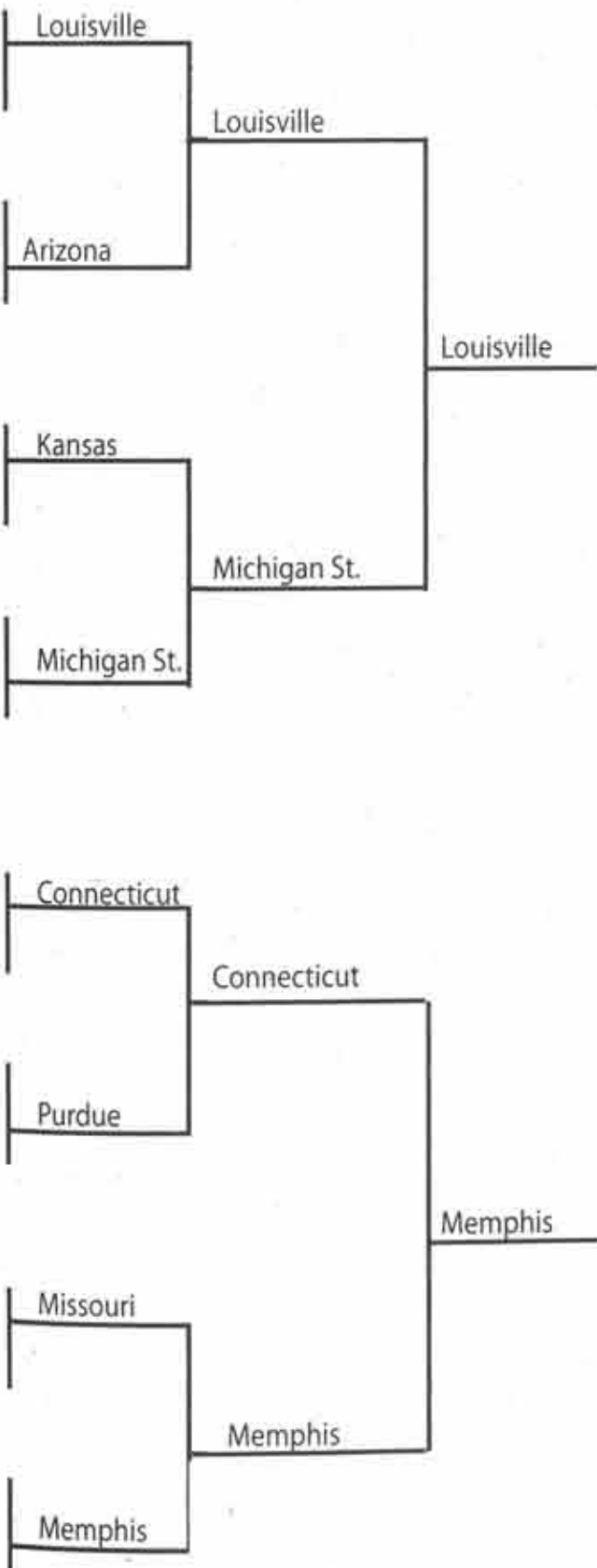
In the first round, the number-three Villanova Wildcats narrowly overcame a barrage of three-pointers and a massive upset by the # 14 American Eagles squad. In the round of 32, the Wildcats embarrassed the number-six UCLA Bruins and looked outstanding in the process. Villanova really got their stride back, rebounding, driving to the net and getting to the foul line.

The number-two-seeded Duke Blue Devils have not looked as marvellous as Villanova through the first two rounds. Duke did not look impressive in their narrow 74-69 victory over the Texas Longhorns, seemingly basing their entire offence around Gerald Henderson.

Villanova's oversized guards will be a handful for Duke's backcourt. And, you can never count Coach Mike Krzyzewski out; he's won numerous NCAA titles for a reason. Thursday night will be a fantastic night of games and be sure to catch this exciting matchup.

Watch out for: Nic Wise, Arizona Wildcats

Wise has averaged almost 16 points and 5 assists per game during the regular season and has only improved during the tournament. Usually considered number three amongst other Arizona standouts Jordan Hill and Chase Budinger, Wise has amassed 50 points and a 17-17 mark from the free-throw line through the first two games. If he can continue his stellar play and lead the big three for Arizona, they will be sure to cause top-seeded Louisville Cardinals some problems in their matchup on Thursday.



Ovie being Ovie

Goal celebrations will be looked at during the next GMs' meeting, but should Ovechkin really be penalized for being happy about scoring?



JUSTIN FAUTEUX
STAFF WRITER

It's no secret that Alexander Ovechkin loves to score goals. The incredible Russian has already scored 213 of them as he reaches the end of his fourth NHL season.

And with every single one, we've seen Ovechkin jumping through the air, smiling from ear to ear, pumping his fist and celebrating in a variety of other entertaining ways.

So everyone knew he had something special cooked up for his 50th goal of this season. When it happened, Thursday night in Tampa Bay, Alexander the Great did not disappoint.

After he snapped a quick shot past Lightning goalie Mike McKenna, making Ovechkin the first Capitals player with three 50-goal seasons, he dropped his stick to the ice, holding his hands above it, as if it were too hot to touch.

Pretty good for the NHL, right?

Well not everyone thought so. A large fraction of the league, coaches, players and GM's combined, started ripping Ovechkin, calling him a showboat, disrespectful and immature.

This issue has already gotten so blown out of proportion that assessing penalties for excessive

celebrations will be discussed at this summer's General Managers' meeting.

I think everyone just needs to calm down and stop taking themselves so seriously. Did Ovechkin pull out a sharpie and autograph the puck? No.

Did he grab a cell phone that he had hidden in the net? No.

Did he stand on Tampa's logo at centre ice and taunt the team? No.

For those who don't know, the above examples are all touchdown celebrations from the NFL, when this was a huge issue in the No-Fun-League a few years ago. Now those are blatant displays of disrespect, and I had no problem with NFL cracking down on these celebrations, which really were getting out of hand.

But the NFL could afford to do this. It's the most popular sport in the United States, all its teams do well. It's full of personable characters who can show their personalities in ways besides touchdown celebrations.

The NHL, on the other hand, is not in such a fortunate position. It has almost no audience south of the border, a number of its teams are struggling, and aside from the ultra-annoying Sean Avery, Ovechkin is really the only colourful personality.

Sure the league is full of talented players, but Pavel Datsyuk and Henrik Zetterberg don't really say much, Evgeni Malkin can barely

speak English, and the only personality we've ever seen from Sidney Crosby is when he jumped around like a hyper eight-year-old after he scored that shoot-out goal in last year's Winter Classic.

Ovechkin is the only player who brings excitement to the game through both his play and his personality.

He's hilarious with the media, he jokes around on the bench, and how happy he is after he scores is enough to make anyone smile.

If the NHL starts cracking down on goal celebrations, this element that Ovechkin brings will die. And this will have dire consequences south of the border.

Most American teams have extreme difficulty drawing fans, with their one reprieve being the number of casual hockey-watchers who buy a ticket when Ovechkin and the Caps come to town.

On TV, I'm sure there's a massive amount of Americans who tune in solely to watch the Russian superstar for his antics just as much as his talent.

While taking this aspect of Ovechkin's game away may not kill hockey in the USA completely, it certainly won't help the cause. And with the NHL seemingly determined to make their league grow south of the 49th, they need all the help they can get.

So my advice to the NHL is just let Ovie be Ovie - it's good for business.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CLOWNING AROUND - Ovechkin has been criticized for his antics.

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Silver medal for Hawks

The Hawks pick up their second consecutive silver medal at the women's hockey national championships in a 3-1 loss to McGill

- FROM HOCKEY, COVER

"I was proud of the team," said fifth-year captain Andrea Bevan. "I think we could have come away with gold, but it wasn't in the cards this year."

The game began as a back-and-forth affair, the first shot coming from McGill four minutes in. Five minutes later, the Hawks took their first shot on net.

It was the Martlets who would penetrate first, however, as McGill's leading scorer Ann-Sophie Bettez beat Hawks goalkeeper Liz Knox with a high shot.

"WE DIDN'T GET A LOT OF BOUNCES. ... A LOT OF CALLS DIDN'T GO OUR WAY, WHICH IS REALLY FRUSTRATING FOR US."

- Andrea Bevan, Hawks captain

"The first goal was tough on us, but not nearly as tough as the second," said Osborne.

"Our game plan would have worked fine if it hadn't been for [Catherine Ward].

"She was always just half-a-step quicker, she would wheel the puck out and she's so poised. She's a smart player," said Osborne of the Martlets defender.

McGill would make it 2-0 before a series of WLU penalties finished

off the second period.

In the third period, the Hawks came out determined to play the game into the final seconds.

The Martlets powered a third goal past Knox; however, just under a minute later, veteran forwards Lauren Barch and Andrea Ironside engaged in a two-on-one before Ironside fed the puck beautifully to Barch who slammed it home, making the game 3-1 with eight minutes left on the clock.

Suddenly, momentum was in the Hawks' favour and they immediately began pressing for goal number two.

Instead, the Hawks were faced with one penalty after another, being forced to kill ten minutes of powerplay in the third period alone.

"At the end of each period we kept saying we weren't giving up. As soon as we got that one

goal, if we hadn't gotten those penalties, I think we would have made a game of it," said Barch.

"We were coming back, we were getting shots and we just lost all momentum when she gave us stupid penalties."

"Obviously we didn't get a lot of bounces," said Bevan. "A lot of calls didn't go our way, which is really frustrating for us."

With 1:53 left on the clock, Knox was pulled from the net, giving the



RYAN STEWART

UNTOUCHABLE - Katherine Shirriff chases Vanessa Davidson as McGill proves too quick for the Hawks.

Hawks a six-on-five advantage.

With the puck in the Martlets end, the referee called a penalty, sending Barch to the box for the remainder of the game.

"We were trying to figure out what she got the penalty for, because our

player got hit, and we got sent to the box," commented Bevan. "We couldn't really stand back and play it like a regular penalty kill. We had to use it like we had an opportunity to counter-attack."

Having played their last games

for the Hawks, Barch says next year she wants to travel, while the future is not so certain for Bevan.

"My options are wide open. I would love to stay with [hockey] in some capacity, whether it's playing or coaching."



RYAN STEWART

BRILLIANT BARCH - Lauren Barch scores the only Hawks goal.

CORD/ONLINE

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Seeing STARRs - 10

With hiring for next year already underway, *The Cord* examines the

KARI PRITCHARD
FEATURES EDITOR

If you've ever applied for a position within the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union (WLUSU), the odds are that you've come across STARR: Situation, Task, Action, Result and Relate, otherwise known as WLUSU's hiring practice. Some students love STARR while others simply despise it; whichever side of the fence you rest on, *The Cord* has stepped in to give this controversial hiring practice a closer inspection.

STARR, a hiring system based on asking interviewees behaviour-based questions, "historically came as a reaction to some of the nepotism [WLUSU] had, people hiring their friends as their executives," said Dan Preston, current vice president of human resources. He added that STARR "was a way to objectively hire our volunteers, or at least try to objectively hire our volunteers."

Jennifer Gunn, co-ordinator of the hiring committee, recalls STARR's introduction at Laurier as a result of an excess of willing vol-

unteers and not enough positions.

"There had to become a competitive or interview-based system and STARR was chosen," said Gunn. "STARR is a way to put everyone on the same, level playing field so while people might be more qualified for certain positions based on their experience, everybody can draw from different experiences in the same way."

Although behaviour-based questions like the ones used in STARR can be fair, the system still has flaws, many of which are familiar to Laurier students.

"Part of the difficulty ... is sometimes you want [personal opinions] in the hiring system, to a degree at least, to reward someone's creativity and their personality in the hiring system; the current system doesn't really allow for that," said Preston of STARR.

Another critical issue that STARR presents is the need to train co-ordinators and executives of organizations to hire general volunteers using the system, giving these students a clear advantage over others.

"One of the questions that I've struggled with all year, to be honest, is how do we remove the advantage of people that have either hired before or have just gone through ten or twelve interviews?" said Preston.

"I haven't come up with a good solution to do that simply because in order to remove that advantage we'd almost have to change the questions or change the marking scheme every year."

"We've put more focus on relevance of what [students] are trying to bring," said Gunn of STARR's unavoidable advantage problems, and have also thought about "adding more questions and cycling the questions so that people that have been here for longer who know the

questions better will kind of

Changes are also in the taste and fear of STARR.

"The major change that is general positions we're no longer creative components," said Preston simply hire virtually all of

"People will go online to write a letter and then depending on how fast they get it right away."

By using only an online application, it still to be decided, Preston said more willing to volunteer.

The online applications will be giving committed volunteers, although it still see that the "volunteer" applying for and were really of

For tips to successfully interview, the wlusuh.com website for the hiring committee's requirements, keep an eye on the sessions held at the beginning of the year or ask a friend, ice breaker or volunteer before.

If this advice just doesn't cut it, another resource: himself, or the hiring VP of human resources.

"If they've done interviews

Comparative methods of hiring

The University of Western Ontario

"We have about 19,000 students involved in our club system," said Rachel Halpern, communications officer at the University of Western Ontario's University Student Council (USC). "We also have about 180 to 200 council members, that's commissioners, councillors and committee members."

At Western, councillor positions are elected representatives of each constituency, like faculty or residence life, and are the people who sit in on council meetings as well as voting members.

There are six executive positions within USC, and "under each of them has co-ordinators and commissioners," said Halpern.

"Some commissionerships are very specific, they're portfolio-specific," said Halpern, describing some of the eighty positions, such as the volunteer commissioner who assists in volunteer week, the chief returning officer who oversees elections and the media commissioner who hosts the union's talk show.

Commissioners and co-ordinators go through an application and interview process decided by the interviewer and the incoming and outgoing executive members of Western's nomination committee.

While some interview questions students may come across are fairly general, "some are more specific to the position they're ap-

plying for and some of them are specific to the ideas they would have presented in their application," said Halpern.

"[The questions] definitely do change every year depending on what someone's looking for in that person as well as what they presented in their application."

Unlike Laurier, Western's hiring practices do not involve a rigid grading system.

"We don't really have a marking system so much as we just rate them on the ideas they have, how well we think they would suit the position, their time commitments and their experience as well."

Halpern said she has never encountered any issues with Western's volunteer hiring processes, something that cannot be said of STARR.

The University of Toronto

Like Western, the University of Toronto (U of T) has commissions and committees who are "active members of the students' union," said Tanya Speight, communications and services co-ordinator for the U of T students' union.

"We do a lot of events around all sorts of topics, whether it be sustainability on campus or tuition fees ... when we have events or forums we rely heavily on the active members of our volunteers of the students' union," she continued.

Although U of T does have a strong volunteer base, "We do try and employ students as much as

we can to run the services," said Speight.

"As an example, we sell discounted metro passes ... and we need about twenty-five people to be on staff throughout the year so we hire them. It's a big job and it's not fun so we don't want to make them sit there selling 10,000 metro passes [without getting paid]."

Speight also mentioned a hired student poster service used at U of T as well as poll clerks, a chief returning officer and a deputy returning officer hired for the union's biannual elections.

When it comes to hiring practices, U of T's union is flexible. "It depends on the person and whatever service they're running, they will do it based on their needs," said Speight, adding that they generally ask for a resumé or application form.

The biggest difference between Laurier's hiring practices and those used by U of T is the interview process.

At U of T's union, "They don't do a real interview, like a scary interview," said Speight. Rather, applicants and committee members will meet to "make sure that the person knows what the job entails and that they're comfortable with it ... it's a very informal process."

Despite the lack of a rigid structure, the U of T students' union has never had any issues with their hiring practices, showing that STARR is not the only successful hiring option available.

A history of STARR

Easily identified as an issue of controversy at Laurier, the STARR hiring system was implemented approximately ten years ago and remains almost exactly the same system used for hiring volunteers today.

In 2004, about five years after its introduction, some of the first public criticisms of the system arose to divide students on either the love or hate side of the STARR fence.

On April 7, 2004 the exact scoring system behind STARR was leaked on former WLUSU director Tudor Costache's blog. The leak spurred other directors to question the effectiveness of the hiring system.

Former Director David Alexander formally proposed a motion to the Board of Directors to have the then VP of Human Resources Mark Walhout investigate STARR's efficiency as a hiring system, noting the lack of ability to acknowledge volunteers' prior experiences within the STARR system.

From the other side, Walhout and past WLUSU President Steve Welker felt that STARR was still a plausible hiring system. Walhout advised that with thorough answers one's past experiences could be acknowledged, while Welker felt that the investigation into STARR's effectiveness would not lead to having the system changed.

Nadine Fladd, WLUSU's 2003-2004 volunteer of the year, disagreed with Walhout and Welker, saying that STARR does not measure relevant qualities but

rather how well one is able to answer STARR questions.

Five years later, students are still divided when it comes to STARR.

A third-year business major and WLUSU volunteer who requested to remain anonymous because of his status and association with WLUSU shared similar views to Fladd, admitting that STARR is a "flawed system" that rewards volunteers on their ability to use STARR.

This student was at a loss as to what STARR could be replaced with, but said "change is definitely needed if Laurier prides itself on hiring volunteers."

Fourth-year music student Aaron Mariash has never used STARR, but has heard from friends that have gone through WLUSU interviews that "most people seem to get nervous and had no idea what to say," suggesting that an interview process should be "more tailored to each group."

Yet not all students are against STARR. Second-year philosophy major Laura Sedgwick likes STARR because students "know what to expect" and there is "no hidden agenda."

While Sedgwick realizes STARR's potential to be manipulated, she still believes STARR is a "consistent method that doesn't favour people."

Although recent changes have been made to STARR to allow students to provide hypothetical answers to questions, future changes are uncertain for WLUSU's decade-old hiring system.

S - looking at WLUSU's hiring process

d examines the intricacies of STARR to help future volunteers and compares it to hiring methods used by other universities

positions better will kind of be surprised year after year." Changes are also in the works to help reduce many students' dislike and fear of STARR.

The major change that is going to be made is that for some of the general positions we're no longer going to be doing interviews and written components," said Preston, as some organizations on campus simply hire virtually all of those who apply.

People will go online to wlusuh.com, fill out their online application and then depending on how they fared on that they'll be just hired or not.

By using only an online application for some positions that have to be decided, Preston and Gunn are hoping students will be more willing to volunteer.

The online applications will also ensure Laurier's reputation of having committed volunteers, allowing those marking the applications will see that the "volunteers understood the position they were applying for and were really dedicated to doing it," said Gunn.

For tips to successfully interview through STARR, check out the wlusuh.com website for descriptions of each letterhead position, requirements, keep an eye out for STARR information held at the beginning of the school year. Ask a friend, ice breaker or don who has volunteered before.

This advice just doesn't cut it, Preston has another resource: himself, or the incoming VP of human resources.

If they've done interviews before I

can pull up their more recent one and go over it with them," said Preston, who is also available to offer pointers on how to perform better to those who haven't hired before.

When it comes down to it, Gunn reminds hopeful volunteers to remember the basics: "You just have to know that they're looking for a situation, task, action, result and a relate. Just stay calm, take your time if you need to; there's no pressure."

See PAGE 20 for editorial reaction to this story

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GRAPHIC BY JULIE MARION

Amazing Race: WLU

The Amazing Race challenges students to a race around KW, with a charitable finish for WLU clubs

AMBER CORDEIRO
CORD STUDENT LIFE

With the influx of research papers, final essays and exams to write, many students are busy focusing all their attention on schoolwork, while others continue to stay involved with extracurricular activities and indulge in the occasional celebratory night out upon the completion of a dreadful assignment.

A-Team, however, a part of Wilfrid Laurier's students' union, has been busy holding an event that is sure to keep spirits high at the end of the year.

The Amazing Race is an event that has been happening every Wednesday since March 11. The event consists of 15 teams of two competing for their chance to win \$1,000 dollars.

It is intended that the money, which was provided through A-Team's budget, be donated to a campus club or committee of the winning team's choice, but some teams may choose to keep the cash for their own enjoyment. Mike Plevan, A-Team co-ordinator, says many teams choose a club or committee they feel needs more awareness in the Laurier community.

The teams gather at their home base, which last week was the Concourse, and are given their first clue before they take off, completing tasks around the city in hopes of being the first team to get back to home base. Like on the television show, team members must figure out where the locations are and decide how to get there.

To get from place to place, teams can only use motorized vehicles driven by a bus or taxi driver, meaning that no personal vehicles are allowed. Not all the money for transportation comes out of the teams' own pockets, as they are given \$15 in taxi vouchers; however once they run out of the vouchers, they can no longer use cabs as a means of transportation.

So, the teams resort to more green modes of transportation such as biking, skateboarding, scootering and their own two feet.

Some of the committees and clubs competing for the winning cash are 5 Days for the Homeless, the *Vagina Monologues*, Laurier Athletics, Radio Laurier, ERT, Habitat for Humanity and BACCHUS.

On the WLUSU website, a list and photos of all the competing teams can be found, with a short bio of each member and why they have chosen to donate to a particular cause if they win.

Teams joined by submitting a short video to ateam@wlusu.com.

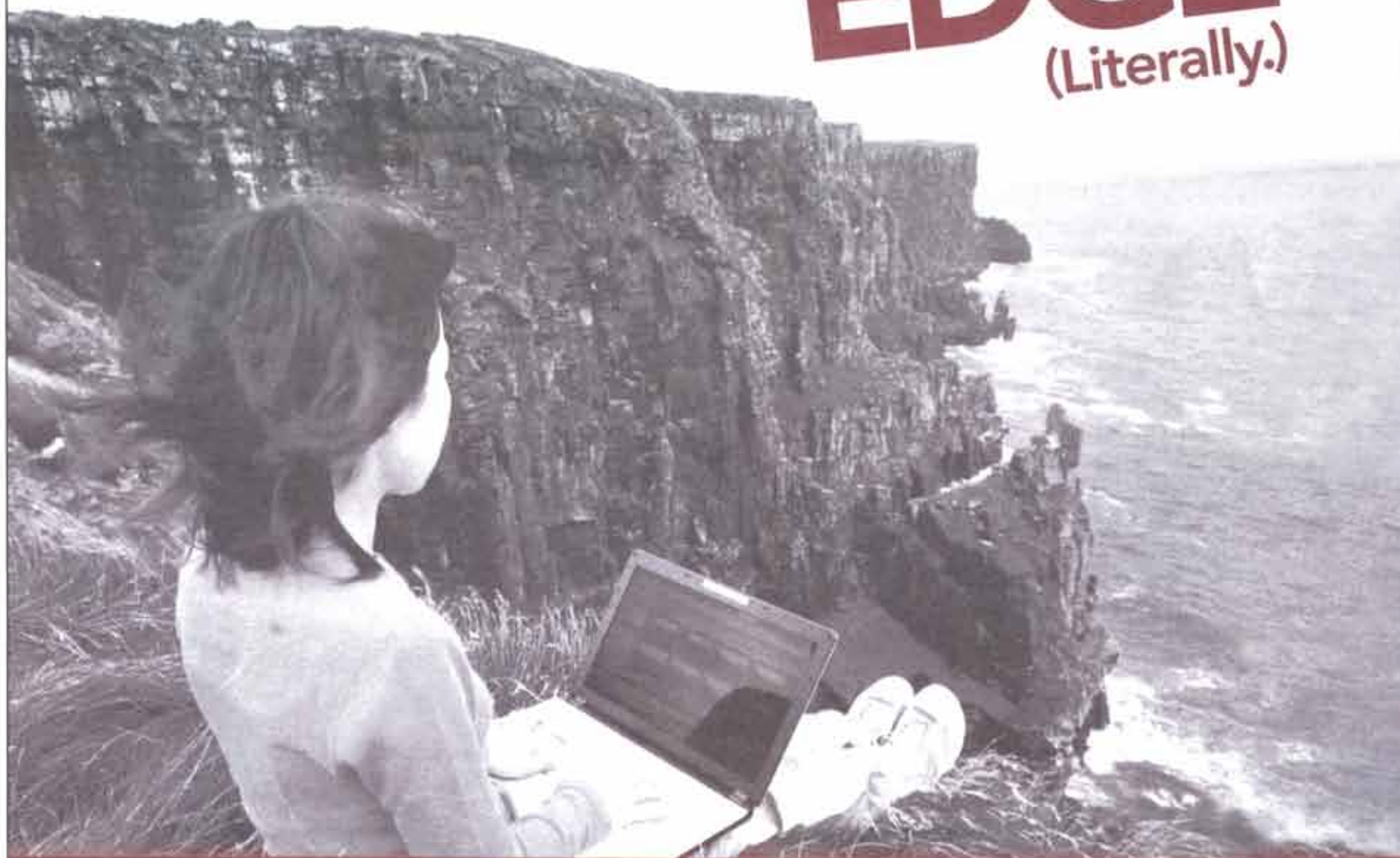
"The videos were required to be creative, explaining why they wanted to participate and for whom they would be racing. It was really interesting to see what participants came up with. The videos were great to watch and a fun way to incorporate the show into our event," says Plevan, who hopes the event will be just as much fun next year, as it seems all the teams are having a blast.



LYLA WILSON

RUNNING MAN - Amazing Race participants got ready to start the challenge on Wednesday evening.

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First-year students get slimed at the Turret

First-year students and Ice Breakers participated in reminiscing about gameshow *Uh Oh!* on Friday

JODIE MACE
CORD STUDENT LIFE

Those first-year students who cried when O-Week ended got a chance to relive the fun all over again last Friday night at the Turret, where Pit Krüe and A-Team put on a production of the gameshow *Uh Oh!*.

The gameshow is a classic YTV program, where the punishment for getting a question wrong was having your teammate covered in a bucketful of slime.

If your memory is a bit fuzzy, here's a brief explanation of how the game is played. Players take turns spinning a wheel divided into sections such as "Mayhem," "The Dump," "Win & Spin," "Speed Round" and, of course, the eponymous "Uh Oh!"

Each spot on the wheel requires a teammate of the spinner to perform a different task.

If the wheel stops at "Uh Oh!" the unfortunate teammate gets carried off to a booth by the Punisher, a scary, black-clad guy in a mask.

The host asks a multiple-choice trivia question to the player who spun the wheel, and if he or she answers incorrectly the teammate in the booth gets slimed.

There's more to the game than this, of course, but the actual rules aren't important. What's important is that by the end of the game, everyone is covered in colourful goo.

Uh Oh! was the game show chosen by Pit Krüe and A-Team because it was "something [first-year students] would remember from their childhood," said A-Team Co-ordinator Mike Plevan.

The Canadian kids' show was reproduced quite faithfully, right down to the packages of Hubba-Bubba that were handed out to each member of the audience. It was important to the co-ordinators

of the event that they remain "as true to the show as possible," according to Pit Krüe Co-ordinator Bobby Thompson.

Plevan added that "as long as you try your best to ... replicate the original gameshow, then people are going to appreciate it that much more."

One thing that stuck out to those familiar with the TV show was that, in this production, the role of the Punisher was played by not one but two people.

Andrew Noble (in a gorilla suit and a Pit Krüe sweatshirt) carried unlucky contestants over to the slime booth, while Lexi McCann (decked out in a Halloween skeleton costume and spiderweb mask) took on the all-important job of unleashing a torrent of pretty pastel slime over their heads.

In case you're wondering, the slime was a simple concoction of flour, water and food colouring.

There were also two hosts: Wink and Yahoo, played by Simcoe Carmichael and Matt Maich. On the original, the host of the TV show was simply known as Wink Yahoo.

As contestants, first-year students reassumed their O-Week colours to divide themselves into four teams (red, blue, green and gold) of four people each.

When the wheel landed on "Uh Oh!," contestants were asked trivia questions that dealt with such varied topics as US presidents, obscure phobias, zodiac signs and the average depth of Lake Erie (sixty-two feet).

Contestants sentenced to the slime booth wore hooded white jumpsuits over their clothes to prevent themselves from getting messy if their teammate got the question wrong.

The Mayhem games saw contestants performing ridiculous tasks



EMILY VANDERHEIDE

SHOWERED IN SLIME - A contestant gets doused in slime at the Turret on Friday night while playing *Uh Oh!*

such as bobbing for eyes of newt in a tub of red Jell-O; trying to fill a plastic cup with juice in twenty seconds by manually squeezing fresh tomatoes; and fishing for quarters in a pulpy pink mixture of spaghetti, cottage cheese, rotten milk and oranges.

The event, which was scheduled to start at 8:00 p.m. and ran roughly until 9:45 p.m., was free to contestants and audience members, who

remained appropriately rambunctious throughout the game. It was clear that everyone was having a great time, whether they were competing on stage or simply cheering on their team.

Hayley Shaughnessy, a contestant on the blue team, cheerfully remarked after the game, "I'm glad I didn't get slimed."

Although the green team won the first round with 85 points, the

gold team ultimately emerged the victor with a cumulative score of 140 points. Each member of the winning team was awarded handsomely with a \$125 Future Shop gift card.

"We had a fantastic time. Pit Krüe and A-Team did an awesome job," said gold team members Kevin George and John East, still high on their victory. They added, half-jokingly, "We're livin' the dream."

Striptease spells fun in Montréal

In an interesting twist on an old classic, Concordia University students strip down to their skivvies for a chance to be named the champion speller

MADLINE COLEMAN
THE LINK (CONCORDIA)

MONTREAL (CUP) - Mainline Theatre, downtown Montreal. The lights are dimmed. The beers are in hand.

drenched figure onstage peels off yet another article of clothing, one less shield between their skin and the unwholesome eyes of slaving masses.

A man leans close to the microphone and, with great lev-

"Glockenspiel."

Welcome to the exhilarating world of the strip spelling bee.

Most bees provide the chance to show off your brains - and if you're willing to do that, Sherwin Tjia, the Honeysuckle Strip Spelling Bee

"I'm a pretty good speller," said Tjia, but "as good as you think you are, there's always someone better."

This won't be Tjia's first spelling extravaganza. He hosted one touted as a "hipster spelling bee" last year, but felt it lacked a certain je ne sais quoi.

That missing element was, as it usually is, nudity.

Upping the stakes even higher

ipant is guaranteed a free drink.

Tjia has a penchant for social events last suffered in middle school; he also co-organizes the bar's popular Slowdance Nights.

The former Concordia student likes "to take old things and make them new."

For him, this seemingly nostalgic brand of festivity is really all about exorcising old demons.

Walking for awareness

Ontario Tamil students are walking to Chicago for Oprah's attention

LINDA GIVETASH
STAFF WRITER

In light of the violent humanitarian crisis occurring in Sri Lanka, a group of students from Ontario have decided to take action, walking from the United States consulate in Toronto to Harpo Studios in Chicago. They hope to be featured on *Oprah* and be given the chance to address the audience on the issue.

The struggle in Sri Lanka is occurring between the government and separatist group the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), labelled as terrorists by Canada in 2006. Although on the surface this is a political dispute, those being most seriously affected are innocent civilians.

Kannan Srekantha, a WLU alumnus taking part in the walk, said, "This is not about politics. We are not taking a political stance. The only thing we are focusing on is the humanitarian crisis; the precise word that I would like to use is genocide."

The civil war has been going on for over 25 years, costing the lives of thousands of civilians. Since late January 2009, over 2,800 have died and 7,000 have been injured. Many of these individuals live within the government-declared no-fire zone.

The no-fire zone spans 14 square kilometres in the northern regions of Sri Lanka. The area is in squalid conditions, is incredibly overcrowded and faces food shortages.

In addition to civilian casualties, the LTTE also supports the use of child soldiers, recruiting those as young as thirteen years of age.

Srekantha and his five fellow students embarking on this walk feel that it is the duty of the governments of Canada and the United States to step in and preserve the rights of peoples in Sri Lanka.

"They've decided to turn a blind eye to the sufferings of our people," said Srekantha, in regards to the Canadian government's lack of intervention in that region.

"We need to engage in something creative and innovative," Srekantha explained on deciding to embark on the walk, "we can only open the world's eyes towards the sufferings of our people and get them to understand this and convince these countries to follow the right course of action."

"Our hope is that through [the public] we could put pressure on to the respective governments."

The group chose Oprah as a figure to support their cause because of the large audience she engages, her own personal struggles and rise to success and, above all, her compassion.

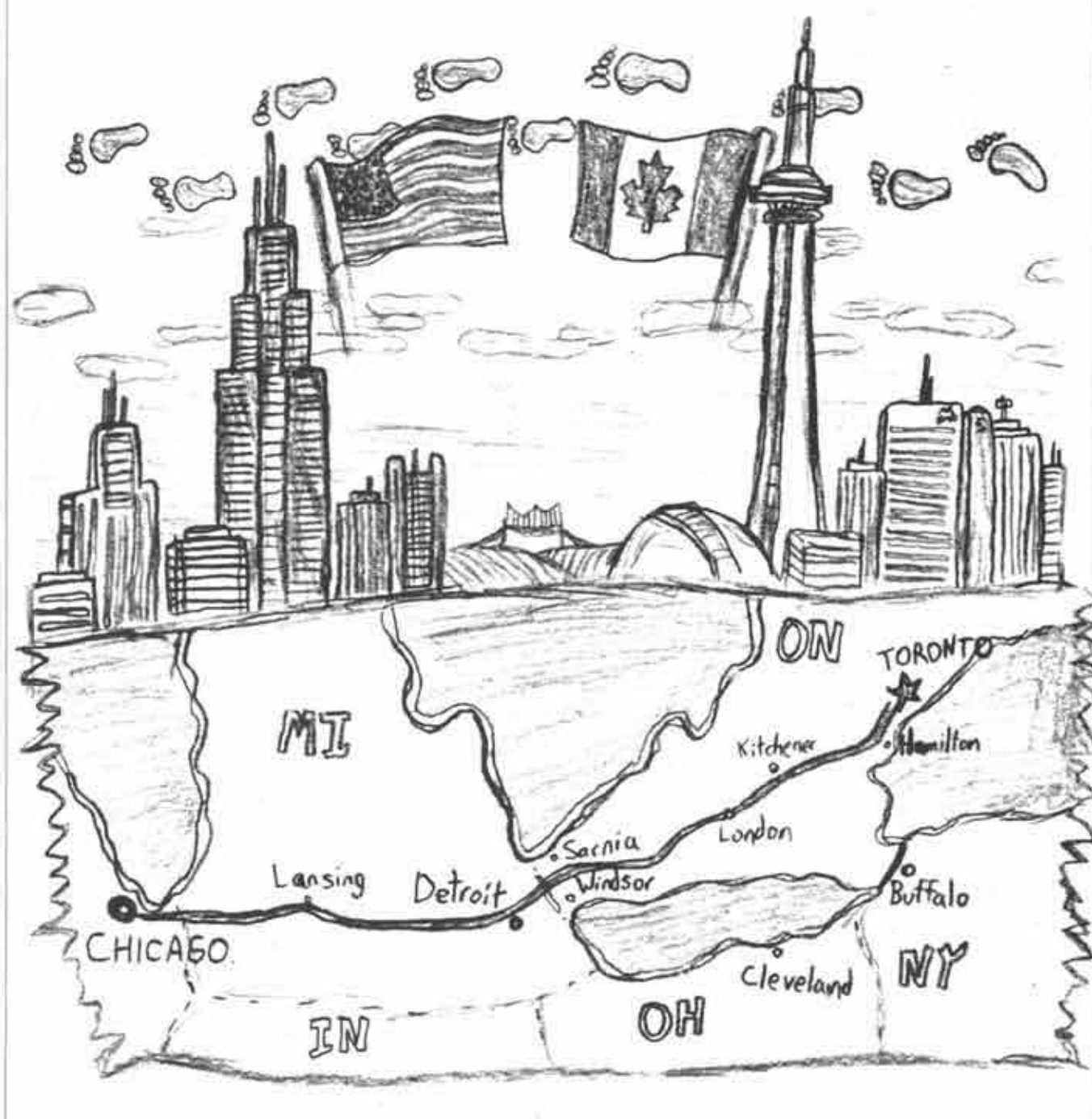
"By engaging with Oprah, it is hoped that we, too, one day can overcome the genocide and live like any other human being in these countries, with equal rights, freedom, free from genocide," said Srekantha.

For those interested in supporting their cause, the group asks that people e-mail Oprah to secure their presence on her show. They also want the public to advocate to their local MPs to take action and organize aid for the people of Sri Lanka. They have drawn financial support from the local Tamil communities

in order to sustain themselves in the walk.

As the walk continues, the group will be updating their website, www.oprahgiveusavoice.handzon-sitemaker.com.

The site will document their public interaction and volunteer work in the communities they stop in. The six students anticipate completing the 840 km walk within the next two months.



GRAPHIC BY MATT ENGLISH

LONG AND WINDING ROAD - Students walk from Toronto to Chicago for awareness of Sri Lankan plight.

Students' sexy spelling bee

- FROM STRIPTEASE, PAGE 17

"[High school] was when I lived my most trauma," he admitted. "I didn't know how to navigate that world so I just stayed out of it."

Now that the hormonal nausea of adolescence is a thing of the past, former school dance wallflowers can join Tjia as he re-enacts "old traumas and [makes] them OK."

Middle school spelling bee enthusiasts were, to their peers, about as cool as kids who were excited about homework. Here we are at the other end of the tunnel, where exhibitionism and orthography meet in unholy union. Has the great unwashed finally decided intelligence is sexy?

Tjia remains skeptical. "I'm not sure how much better it is to be smart. I think it's still better to be beautiful."

Then again, what's more beautiful than a well-spelled word?



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

S-T-R-I-P-T-E-A-S-E - This spelling bee is for an adult audience only.



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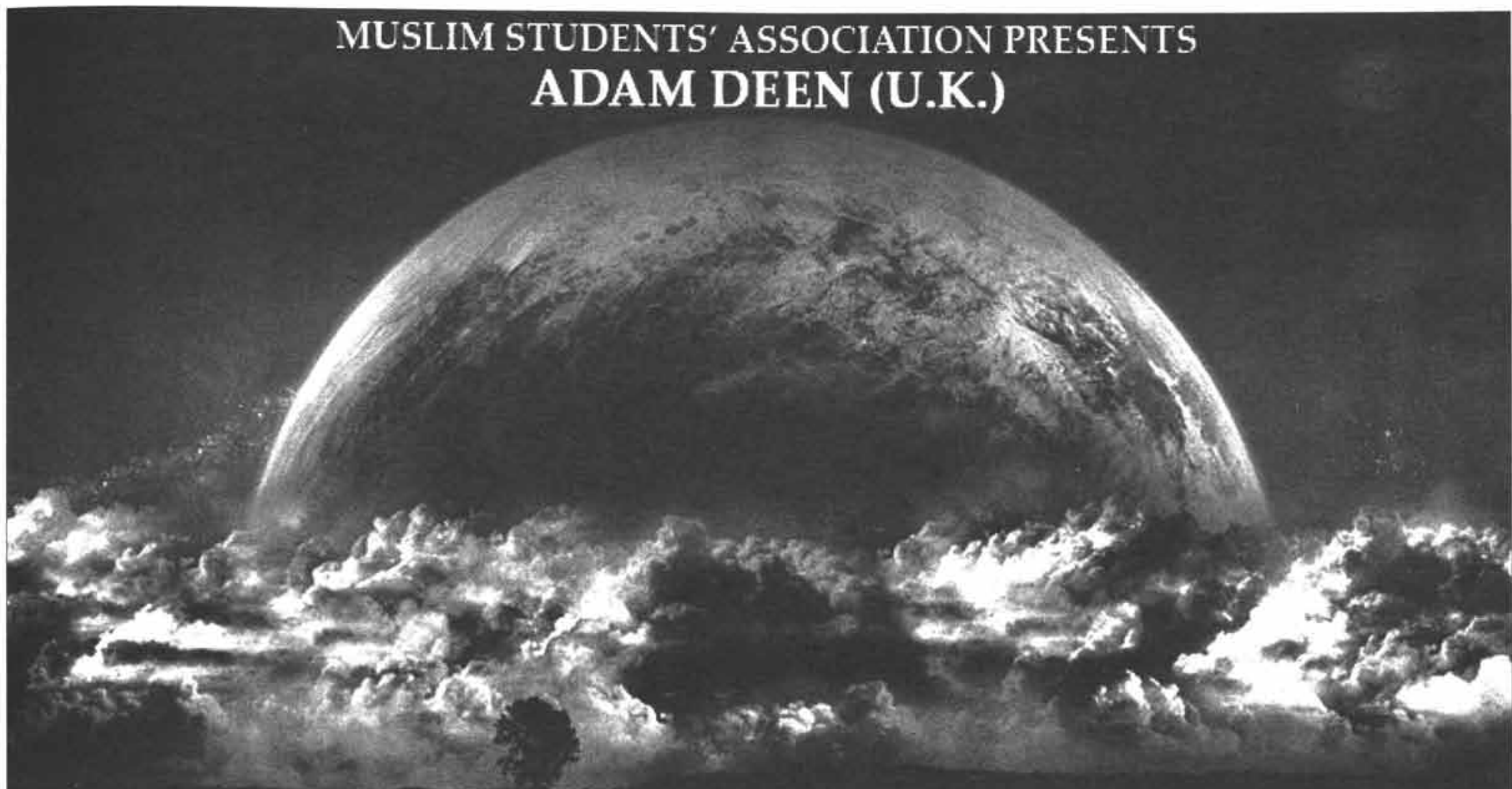
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WLUSU still needs to change STARR

It is no secret that there are flaws with the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union's method for hiring volunteers, namely its practice of grading interviews by STARR.

Students have been voicing complaints about the STARR method for a long time and union officials have long been aware of this. Surprisingly, though, little has been changed about the union's hiring procedures.

Although it has been reconsidered a number of times, the union has repeatedly decided that STARR is the best way to hire its volunteers. Officials argue that the point-based system makes it more difficult for union executives to hire only their friends.

If avoiding insular hiring is the biggest reason for keeping STARR, the union should revise its procedures. The largest flaw of STARR – that those familiar with the scoring system consistently fare better than those new to the system – proves that this interviewing method only reinforces inside hiring.

The hiring experiences of students' unions at other universities in Ontario help to show that WLUSU's rationale behind its use of STARR may not be as relevant as past and current execs had thought.

That both Western's undergraduate students' council and University of Toronto's students' union executives have not used any point-based hiring methods and have never

experienced any difficulty shows that STARR may not be a necessary tool.

This is not surprising. University students are reaching adulthood. If they are treated with professionalism and respect during hiring situations and are allowed to fully explain why they should be hired, it is only reasonable to believe that they will accept the decisions that are made.

WLUSU should realize that by trying to be as fair as possible in its hiring procedures, it fails to treat applicants with the dignity they deserve. The union's consistent stubbornness over STARR is frustrating, and is not backed by sufficient reason.

Executives have taken this into account to some extent, and some minor changes are being made to reduce the importance of STARR for some positions next year. However, the main issue still exists and it is time that WLUSU makes an earnest attempt to solve it.

With new WLUSU administration and union restructuring taking place this spring, it is as good a time as any to further alter the union's hiring processes beyond the small changes already being made.

Of course, this argument has been made before. It is, however, still an important argument to make, and will remain so until use of the STARR method is no longer one of WLUSU's largest flaws.

Earth Hour means a vote

Earth Hour proves to be an exciting international movement. Whether or not its goal of one billion participants is reached this year, it is good that Laurier is doing its part to participate in the event.

Laurier students should also be encouraged to turn off their lights between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. on Saturday.

However, participants should realize that the simple act of turning off one's lights for an hour is not the real purpose of Earth Hour. Many critics have pointed out that the day itself does nothing to help the environment, and to an extent, they are right.

People must recognize that turning off their lights for one hour a year does not even put a dent in the problem of climate change.

Participants should realize that Earth Hour is about awareness. Participating in this event means casting a global vote in favour of addressing climate change.

People should keep this vote in mind as their real motivation for participating in Earth Hour.

These unsigned editorials were agreed upon by at least two-thirds of The Cord's editorial board and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Cord's volunteers, staff or WLUSU.

THE CORD WEEKLY

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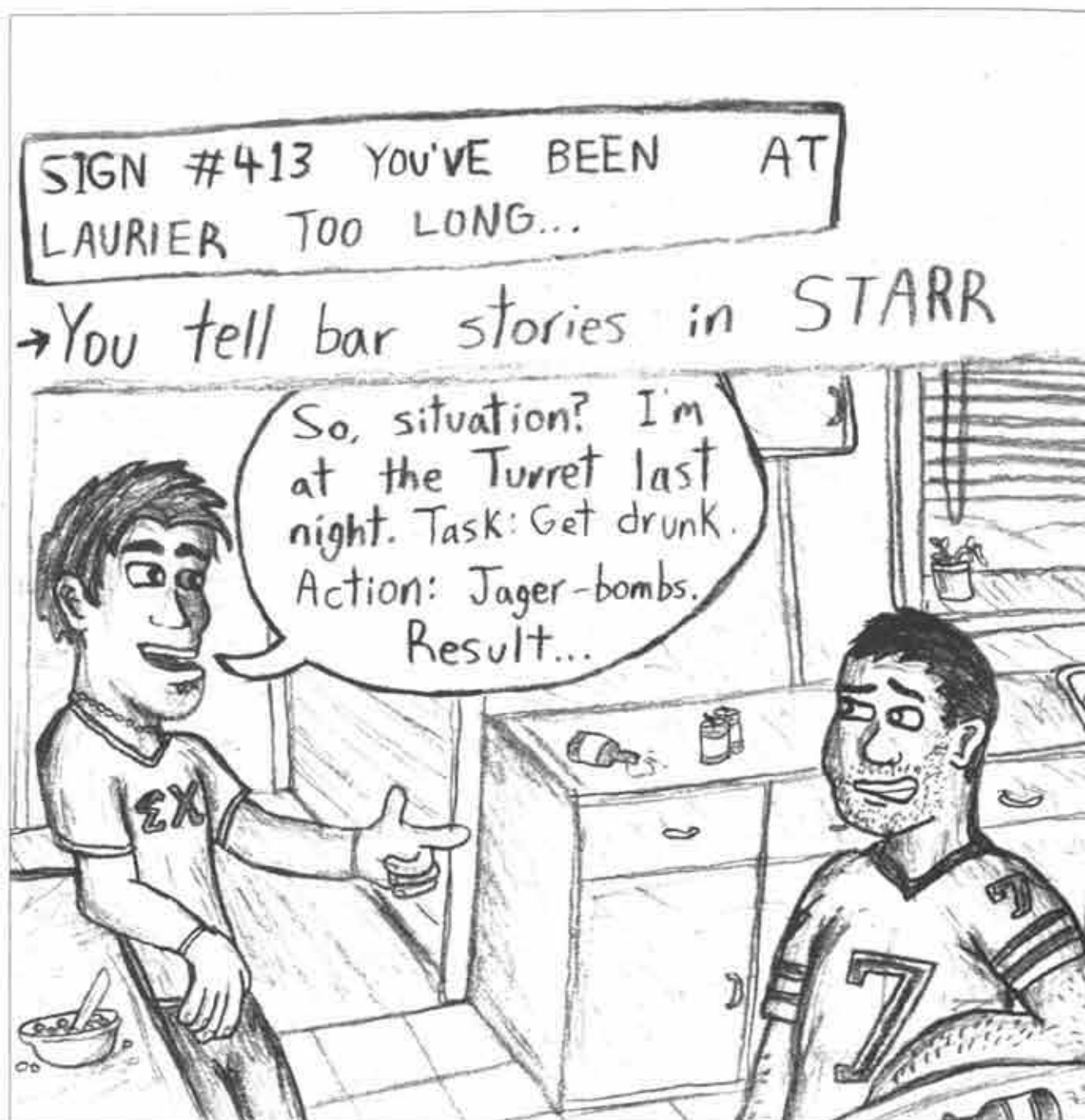
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GRAPHIC BY MATT ENGLISH

Journalism needed for strong democracy

The death of newspapers around the continent poses a threat to society



MICHELLE CALDARONI
STUDENT LIFE EDITOR

Journalism, democracy and society are three concepts that are inextricably linked to one another, whether or not the general public may believe so in this time of economic crisis.

If I have learned one thing in my career as a student of communications, it is that the biggest benefit of having a free press is being able to disseminate information, thereby giving the people the appropriate information required for making decisions.

The decisions I refer to are not which brand to choose, which pundit to believe or where to buy their next cup of coffee.

Instead, unbiased journalism grants citizens in a democratic society the ability to decipher political agendas and the opportunity to know which candidate they will elect.

In the current economic climate of North America, newspapers are folding left, right and centre.

2009 has marked the end of such print newspapers as the 150-year-old *Rocky Mountain News*, and has seen some of the oldest and most prestigious newspapers such as *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (founded in 1829) and the *Los An-*

geles Times (founded in 1881) file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Currently, these newspapers are trying to salvage what is left of their defunct business models.

On a more relatable level, there is a gap in local community reporting that grows wider each time downsizing occurs at news bureaus, and this spells out trouble for members of those communities.

Corruption, scandal and bad decisions are being given the chance to flourish unchecked as journalists work with fewer and fewer resources.

IN LIGHT OF THE DECLINE IN NEWS SOURCES IN NORTH AMERICA, WE AS A SOCIETY MUST REALIZE THAT THIS IS A DANGEROUS TIME FOR DEMOCRACY.

What's worse, communities have little foresight to recognize the service that journalists provide in keeping the fabric of democracy together before it has a chance to tear.

In light of the decline in news sources in North America, we as a society must realize that this is a dangerous time for democracy.

As the fourth estate, the press is held to the position of policing the government's actions and also being the watchdog of society. It is the duty of a journalist to present

the facts of a situation or story and have the society make a decision based on the unbiased information given. Without the press, how will the society make decisions?

Just because the print editions of newspapers are folding does not mean journalism ends.

Journalism needs to evolve. Hopefully media organizations will take this opportunity to do some restructuring that will aid the press in doing an even better job of reporting on important issues.

But beware. There is currently a soft spot in the fabric where the fourth estate would normally be watching out in better economic times.

With a lack of resources, investigative journalism is on its last legs, leaving room for corruption and backdoor deals in democracy.

The fourth estate must be vigilant lest the truth slips through the cracks.

Meanwhile, citizens of North America must understand how important it is to question everything and to support media so it can perform to its most noble calling, in bad economic times or not.

letters@cordweekly.com

Homelessness a much bigger problem

The 5 Days for the Homeless campaign only showed a small, stereotypical version of what life is like for homeless individuals



JOSH SMYTH
THE EXAMINED LIFE

It was impossible to miss the students who spent last week sleeping outside the FNCC as a part of the "5 Days for the Homeless" campaign. There were signs, posters, t-shirts, a Foot team, and plenty of press coverage. It was all an excellent reminder of the skills that business students bring to social action.

Indeed, a goal of the campaign was to highlight that business students are not all cold-hearted capitalists. Point well taken. Students and faculty from the other faculties, arts especially, are often way too quick to make sneering caricatures about biz kids.

The campaign also raised a pile of money (almost \$7,000 at last count) for ROOF and Argus, two organizations that do phenomenal work with homeless and troubled youth in KW and Cambridge.

Donations, though, are only part of the story. 5 Days for the Homeless is also a campaign to raise awareness. Unfortunately, the awareness being built is often precisely of the wrong kind, the kind that reinforces the stereotypes many of us hold about the homeless.

The image is certainly a familiar one: tarps and cardboard boxes, layers of clothing, scruffy facial hair and nights spent shivering by the side of a building. The rules of the 5 Days campaign prohibited the participants from showering, having an income or surviving on anything but donated food.

There is, of course, some irony here. Were an actual homeless person to try and set up sleeping

quarters outside the FNCC, security would bundle them off campus long before anyone could donate a cent, never mind a good meal or a caring conversation. They would then have the choice between facing a night on the streets or the insecurity and lack of privacy in a shelter.

This is not a pretty picture by any means. It also has very little to do with what homelessness actually looks like, in this community or elsewhere.

Firstly, only a small proportion of the homeless actually sleep outside on a regular basis. In KW, it's usually fewer than a dozen, compared with the hundreds that use the shelter systems and the hundreds or thousands more that live from couch to couch.

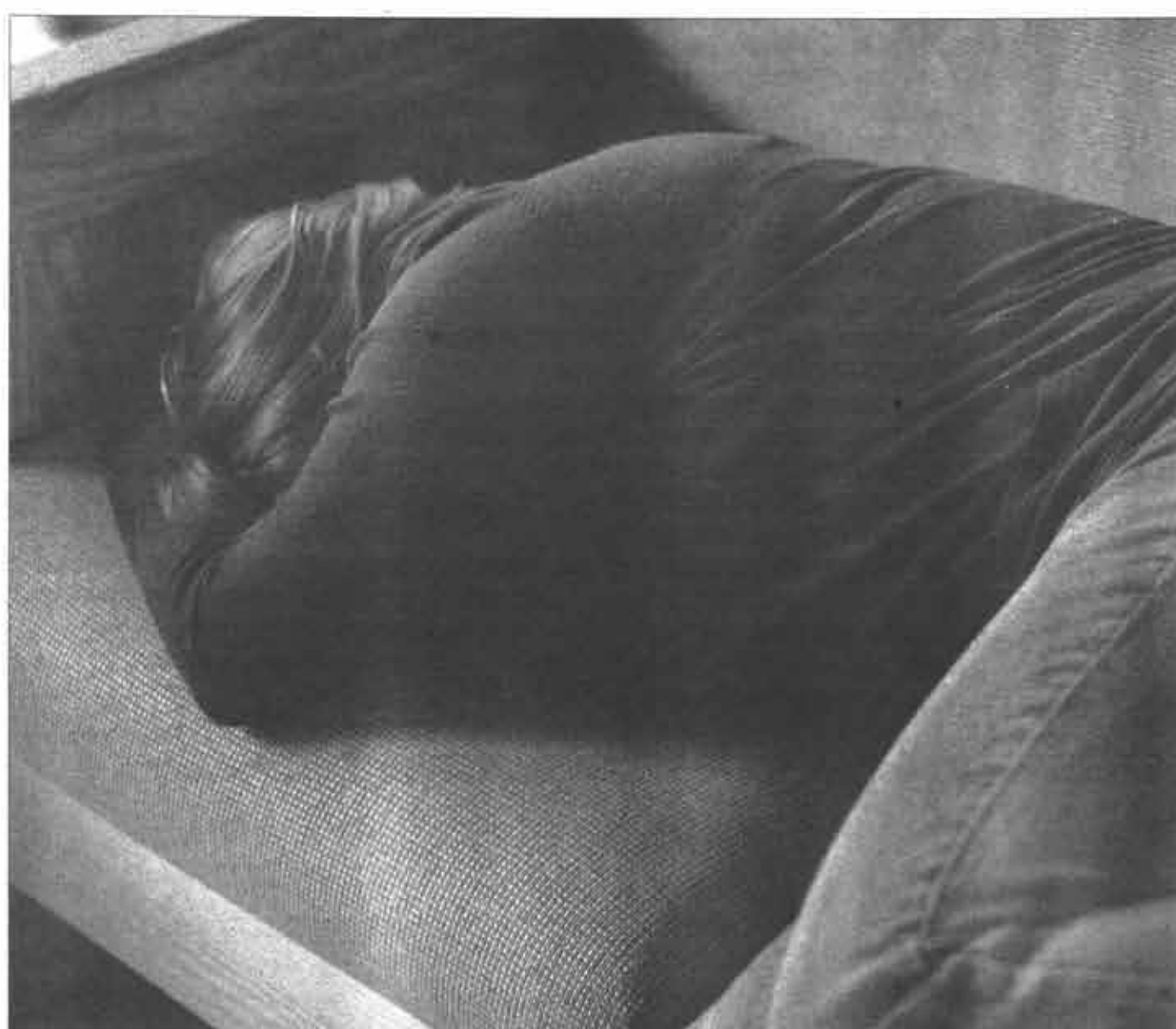
The showering prohibition is also quite problematic; the homeless in this community, and in most, have access to community facilities to bathe and otherwise take care of themselves on a daily basis. The vast majority don't "look homeless" in any recognizable way.

They pass us on the street all the time, and we rarely notice. We work with homeless people. We go to school with them. We maintain a pervasive classism that makes it something deeply shameful.

Our stereotypes of the homeless don't just distort our mental pictures, unfortunately. They also often dictate how we approach solutions to the problem.

As long as we keep equating the homeless with panhandlers alone, or keep seeing them as charity cases, we can do nothing but melt away at the tiny tip of a social iceberg.

This is the real danger: that we will continue to treat the symptoms instead of the disease. Homelessness is not a social problem. It is a



LAURA TOMKINS

COUCH SURFING - Many homeless people are unrecognizable, like those who sleep couch to couch.

consequence, a predictable effect of a heartless and misguided politics. Charity can do amazing things to make homelessness more bearable, but it can never eliminate it.

If we are serious about destroying homelessness, we have to act politically. We need to march up to every single elected representative, at every level, and make it clear that they will never receive our vote until they commit themselves to a minimum wage that people can, heaven forbid, live on.

The push doesn't end there.

While we've got our representatives' backs against the wall, let's demand a guaranteed annual income that will let every Canadian live with dignity and gut the welfare bureaucracy. Let's get started on building much, much more affordable housing.

Although the number of homeless people with mental illness is often exaggerated, many do face it. We may, then, want to do something to rebuild the mental health care system so enthusiastically gutted by the "common sense" revolu-

tionaries of the mid-1990s.

All of these changes, though, depend on a more basic transformation in our understanding of the homeless: from a social pathology to a political constituency. The 5 Days campaign and those like it will remain problematic until they match awareness-building with the destruction of assumptions.

One of their own signs, ironically, said it quite well: "We don't need coins. We want change."

letters@cordweekly.com

Communications studies disappointing

Kim Elworthy laments her education spent in a program that has become too large and rarely delves into the depth of issues



KIMBERLY ELWORTHY
UNDER THE RADAR

There exists a common trend within the communications department, a trend that is continuously reaffirmed every time a (no doubt part-time) professor directs a question towards the student population of the classroom in hopes of actually interacting as if it were an academic environment.

Thirty-five blank, disinterested faces stare into outer space, awaiting the five students actually engaged in the material to ward off that awkward, excruciatingly apparent silence.

The communications department has become the default to achieve a BA and an illustrious "bird" education at Laurier.

For individuals forced into a post-secondary education for the "prestige," comm. studies offers an easy ride to the top.

Especially for those who failed business,

communications fills that marketing/advertising hole.

But what's worrying is that students within comm. studies always appear to be a little more aloof and uncritical than the rest of the student population.

There is a very evident lack of passion and interest expressed by students for the material they are required to learn, even though the content of communications is relevant, interesting and surprisingly applicable to real life.

As one of the largest departments on campus, communications does not have a hard time drawing in students; however, its sheer size has become both its most positive attribute and its most negative flaw.

With many students in the department, classes are plentiful and diverse, but maybe this itself is the reason communications students seem less and less engaged.

With so many students and so many professors, the department is much like a circus.

Students are juggling course loads while part-time professors fly from university to university attempting to manage a regular work week.

Out of forty-seven staff listings, twenty-five are contract academic staff. Also, none of the courses offered in the program last for more than a four-month semester - which is essentially three months, as one is taken up for exams.

Within three months, students are often required to attend lectures, make one presentation, prepare a proposal, write weekly responses, write a midterm, hand in a final essay and write an exam while, of course, keeping up with readings.

Not to mention, some students work part-time or volunteer or both and are dedicated to continuing the Laurier reputation of party-goer extraordinaire.

It is not surprising that many glazed-over faces mindlessly attend lectures and do not engage in class.

This is not to say that other departments are not the same; however, unlike comm., many departments utilize the year-long, one-credit class in order to actually dig in and engage with the material.

With tuition fees at approximately \$5,000 a year for an undergraduate degree, the quality

of the classroom does not match the investment, and it is the students who are passionate about communications who are losing out the most.

Entering a classroom with disengaged peers and barely-there professors leaves little opportunity for developing one's critical thinking.

The comm. department really devalues its degree by rushing through each course so that the professors and students barely begin to grasp the situation by the time it is over.

If students are actually challenged by the material, three months is an impossibly short time to actually study anything; in turn, the professors must grade their students as if they had learned nothing.

In the end, the communications program has simply become too big for its own good. And even though everyone comes out with fairly decent marks, both students and professors are often left feeling empty and a little bit confused.

letters@cordweekly.com

Reverse racism will not lead to progress

Even though there still remains a great deal of racial inequality in society, it is unfair to assume that all Caucasians are bigots



DEVON BUTLER
HYDE PARK CORNER

"Reverse racism" is a recent term used to express the racism and discrimination that Caucasians experience.

Naturally, the concept was virtually laughed at by African-Canadians, Hispanics and other minority groups who have felt oppression by the white race.

The suggestion received harsh criticism.

Minority groups have made the assumption that all white people lead privileged lifestyles and that they could not possibly be the victims of discrimination. The idea in itself has been deemed racist.

Now, I feel the need to clarify that I am absolutely not racist, but that I feel I must defend my character when presenting this issue speaks for itself.

In a recent poll, over 35 percent of Caucasians say they feel that they have been discriminated against or stereotyped due to their skin colour,

while over 60 percent say they have experienced discrimination.

Both the idea and statistics have been rejected by the majority of the black and Aboriginal communities. Historically speaking, it is obvious that whites have not proved to be the kindest, to put it lightly, in regards to black rights nor those of Aboriginals.

However, we have come an exceptional distance since slavery, segregation and residential schools.

Though it is natural to feel compassion towards the suffering of one's ethnic heritage, is it right for minority groups to harbour hatred towards all white people?

Vengeful mindsets will not only suspend progress, but will cause more harm in the long run.

Without a doubt, Caucasians have oppressed just about every minority group possible, and there still exists an unfortunate amount of discrimination and racism towards these groups.

However, we mustn't forget that while the majority of white Americans were enslaving African-Americans, there were also a great deal of whites working to sustain the

Underground Railroad.

When presented with diverse races, it is often assumed that white people will judge individuals based on differences in skin colour.

These judgments were evident to me during high school. I went to a Catholic school, where there was a lack of cultural diversity.

However, the small number of black students there congregated together and shut themselves off from any social interaction with the majority of the school.

VENGEFUL MINDSETS WILL NOT ONLY SUSPEND PROGRESS, BUT WILL CAUSE MORE HARM IN THE LONG RUN.

I befriended a girl who wouldn't admit our friendship to her group of black friends nor associate with me outside of the classroom.

She admitted that her group would not like the fact that she was hanging out with a bunch of "sub-urban white kids."

She would also comment that I had no idea how hard her life was due to her skin colour whilst white

people had life so easy.

I understand this viewpoint to a certain extent. Typically, a white male is supposed to have the most opportunities in society and, generally speaking, this has been proven accurate.

However, some would argue that minority groups have more opportunities than ever before.

A large portion of employers are allowed to discriminate by race and choose members of a visible minority group to show that their workplace is diverse.

In fact, 70 percent of whites fear they have been overlooked for a job because the employer felt the need to practice more diverse hiring.

Has our society progressed to the point where there is now a double standard?

It is fair to have Black Entertainment Television (BET), but proposing White Entertainment Television seems absurd.

Likewise, while there are various black, Hispanic, Aboriginal and Asian pride or associated groups, a white pride group would be reject-

ed.

The problem may appear merely theoretical; however, incidents have proven otherwise.

Last year two women in California were attacked by nine members of a minority group. The women were left with serious injuries; during the trial, the group admitted they attacked the women simply because they were white.

My point is not that whites are now oppressed and affirmative action should be taken for our cause.

The point is simple: if you don't want to be discriminated against due to your race, don't discriminate against mine.

Though I obviously don't condone any of the horrific events my race has committed in the past, no resolution will ever be reached if we harbour unwavering hatred for those who have oppressed us.

It would be much more progressive if we would finally take Martin Luther King's advice and stop judging people based on whatever their skin colour is – even white – and judge by the content of their character.

letters@cordweekly.com

Letters to the Editor

Cord too left wing

I am outraged that the third page of a University campus newspaper has decided to report on an issue of slander that criticizes a large part of the university's population. Wilfrid Laurier as well as all universities in our Democratic nation should be promoting equality and freedom of speech. For *The Cord Weekly* to devote half a page to slandering the Conservative club is outrageous for many reasons. First this article relies on anonymous testimony of an individual who stooped to the undemocratic activity of spying. To report that the Conservatives are conspiring based on the comments of someone too immature to identify herself is left wing journalism at its finest. The second issue with this report is indeed its overwhelming left wing bias. Convicting the Conservatives prematurely goes against the great democratic principle of being innocent until proven guilty. For once *The Cord Weekly* needs to respect the opinions and views of the right leaning student population without painting them to be a radical group that have intentions of taking over. Let I remind everyone Conservatism is the guiding ideology of Canada. From week to week *The Cord Weekly* is promoting the interest of the left by alienating the right. If a right wing newspaper was formed on campus, Liberals, socialists and communist students would be up in arms and demanding equal news coverage. However because they have no reserves about be-

ing hypocritical the left continues to promote Liberal propaganda and slander the right on a regular bases. The Conservative club represented an alternative view for students to support and the sanctity of those meetings has now been violated by vindictive members of the left. If *The Cord Weekly* wanted to report on the activities of the Conservative club it is more rational and reasonable to go directly to the Conservatives and sit in on a meeting, rather than relying blindly on the perspective of a left wing infiltrator.

-Brian Chaplow

PIRG needs collaboration, not division

I am writing in response to the Campus Conservatives' event as discussed in Rebecca Vasluianau's article. Given my personal experiences with LSPIRG during the past three years as a volunteer and a staff member, it is discouraging to see so much resistance to what I feel is a positive influence to student life at Laurier.

Speaking to the "illegitimacy" of PIRG student fees as implied by the Campus Conservatives' meeting, based on my experiences with a number of working groups and volunteers, I feel that LSPIRG provides on-going support and opportunities often not readily available to students wanting to enhance their communities. I would also like to point out that LSPIRG is a completely student-

driven organization, building capacity of students and supporting a diverse range initiatives from all political and ideological fronts so long they are in pursuit of a more just world. As such, we need to be careful not to pigeonhole people (and organizations) as "conservatives / non-conservatives," "left-wing / right-wing," as advocates of social change come in all shapes and sizes, from all walks of life, not necessarily fitting our stereotypes of what their ideological, social or political affiliations are.

In and increasingly fragmenting world afflicted with a plethora of problems, what we need is more collaboration, less division – more dialogue, and less criticism. Don't let LSPIRG "flourish on apathy" because apathy can easily be overcome by engagement! So, think big and be ready to act, because when you come to our office in Room 3-301 with your next great idea to change the world, we'll be ready to help you make it come true!

-Humera Javed
LSPIRG Executive Director

Letters Policy:

All letters to the editor must be signed and submitted with the author's name, student identification number, and telephone number. Letters must be received by 12:00 pm (noon) Monday via email to letters@cordweekly.com or through our website at www.cordweekly.com. Letters must not exceed 350 words.

The Cord reserves the right to edit any letter for brevity and clarity. The Cord reserves the right to reject any letter, in whole or in part. The Cord reserves the right to not publish material that is deemed to be libelous or in contravention with the Cord's Code of Ethics or journalistic standards.

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Campus Pictorial



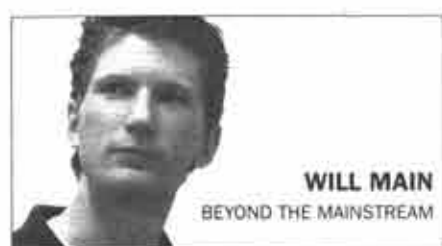
ALEX HAYTER

BUSKING BARD - Busker James Jeffries stops for a jam on campus.



ELLI GARLIN

It shouldn't be all about the Benjamins



WILL MAIN
BEYOND THE MAINSTREAM

Our culture has become consumed by greed.

From top corporate executives getting busted while trying to add a little more to their already seven- or eight-figure salaries, to an economic crisis instigated largely by the overextension of debt, to a public attempting to live beyond their means, at some point we have lost our way.

It seems that we now live our lives as economic calculations, attempting above all else just to earn the biggest piece of the pie that we can. Our economic system has come to render all value as dollar value.

But the problem does not lie inherently within free-market capitalism per se. Rather, it lies within something about which we have at some point become confused, or even forgotten.

In itself, money is utterly valueless. (Well, that's not entirely true; the paper on which a bill is printed is worth some, albeit minute, amount.)

The value we ascribe to money exists because we believe it does. We are confident that someone else

will accept it in exchange for goods or service because they will also believe it to have that value. In this respect, money is merely a means to attain something that is actually of value to us.

The confusion our culture seems to have stumbled into exists in our inattentiveness to this fact. Instead of viewing money strictly as a medium of exchange for things of value, we have begun to consider it a thing of value in itself.

And not just a thing of value, but often *the* thing of value; that thing which we place at the centre of our life's project.

Take education, for example. Most of us no longer primarily regard our educational experience as an opportunity to enrich ourselves as human beings. Instead, we consider it a necessary step towards improving our marketability and earning potential.

None of this is to suggest that money is not still something that we must necessarily consider and pursue so that we may exchange it for things that hold real value. The problems arise when we lose sight of this fact and forget or confuse what it is we are truly chasing.

This may seem an obvious truth to some, or even most. However, when caught up in the game we are often brought up to think we are playing, we may forget to keep it in mind.

There is no need to restructure our economic system, for the problem lies not within it but within us. Instead, we need to reconsider and redefine the ways in which we view our own existence.

When we start living a life aimed at acquiring wealth like points in an arcade game, we start living as machines and cease living as human beings.

Living a life always looking for-

ward, thinking you just need that little bit *more* to be happy, is like trying to fill a leaky bucket. Without the realization that money isn't what you are truly after but only one of many components in that pursuit, one is fated to a life spent chasing a ghost.

True happiness can only be found in the here and now. Happiness exists in value, which for us can only exist in our experience.

And, while money has the power to expand the possibilities of our experience, it can never have the power in itself to make us happy.

So go ahead and chase those Benjamins (or should I say Borden's?), they do have the power to give you access to all kinds of cool shit in life. Just don't forget that they're not what you are truly looking for.

letters@cordweekly.com

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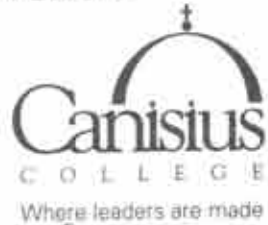
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Last issue's solution:

For 15 year old boy with autism. Support required for summer day camp programs, outings in the community and within the home. Must be creative with activity planning, altruistic in your desire to work with a special needs child, and must have own vehicle. Flexible weekend and evening hours available as well. Laurelwood subdivision. \$13/hr plus .40/km Call Deborah 519-746-1584

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SIMON GLASSMAN, INTERCAMP (GRANT MACEWAN COLLEGE)



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Want to be on
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Blueprint magazine is looking for creative and passionate volunteers for the 2009-2010 academic year!

The following positions are now open to applicants:

Managing Editor: Second in command to the Editor in Chief. Duties include contributing to the creative direction of the magazine by actively engaging in brainstorming sessions and coming up with ideas for issues, collecting articles from contributors and editing for content, and assisting with layout and design on production nights.

Artistic Coordinator: In charge of any visual contributions to the magazine, including pictures and drawings. Photoshop experience is preferred, as this person will also be in charge of designing the covers of each issue. Must be available to assist with layout and design on production nights.

Advertising Coordinator: This person is in charge of getting Blueprint known on campus. This includes updating the website, advertising to attract contributions for each issue, and taking on various other branding initiatives.

Application forms are available outside the WLUSP office in Macdonald House residence.
Please submit applications no later than noon on April 6th, 2009.
Contact Erin at epp.erin@gmail.com with any further inquiries.

Rate applies to WLU students, staff and faculty only

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Not a *Wasteland*, but not *Grace* either

Ex-Libertines frontman Peter Doherty returns to music with *Grace/Wastelands*, but comes up short

SARAH MURPHY
CORD A&E

Overrated crackhead or romantic visionary? Junkie or poetic hero? Kate Moss's ex or former Libertines frontman? These questions of juxtaposition seem to follow Pete Doherty wherever he goes – and quite frankly, the image of the heroin-addled starfucker is the one that seems to hold.

Most people who are familiar

with the Baby Shambles singer were probably introduced to his face splashed across a sea of tabloid fodder for his outrageous antics like stealing cars, squirting blood at the paparazzi, or selling acid to The Strokes. So, his decision to release a solo album presents the occasion for Pete to show the world that he should, in fact, be known for his musical ability. Unsurprisingly, Doherty fails to push the opportunity to its fullest potential, but there

are small moments of redemption scattered throughout *Grace/Wastelands*.

The majority of songs on the album are recycled demo material from his days in the Libertines, which Doherty has been releasing on the Internet over the last decade. "Arcadie" – an older song – opens the album with revamped guitars, courtesy of Blur's Graham Coxon, and explores Doherty's ongoing theme of a romanticized ancient Britain where pipes and dancing in meadows abound. The acoustic melodies on this track showcase Pete in his element, and set a promising tone for the rest of the album.

The first single, "The Last of the English Roses," is a catchy number that tells the story of "coming of age, coming alive" on a high school playground in the early 1990s. Producer Stephen Street (The Smiths, Blur, Baby Shambles) manages to retain the naïve chaos of the popular demo version, though along with many of the other tracks, it gets lost in translation.

"1939 Returning" is one of the few tracks specifically written for this album, and Doherty claims that it was inspired by a dream he had in which he was washing the windows of a butcher shop in 1930s Italy. The haunting melody and beautifully tragic vocals depicting "kids knee deep in rubble" and "London urchins grey with dust" make it one of the strongest songs on *Grace/Wastelands*.

"Salome" takes the listener through a hallucinogenic love af-

fair, but it is Coxon, not Doherty, that shines on this one. "I Am the Rain" – the other recently composed tune on the album – is a surprisingly enjoyable song, with obvious autobiographical implications ("The truth is, I'm ruthless/ I can't be contained").

Nevertheless, "Sweet By and By" is where the album begins to unravel. The jazz piano and trumpets are not only out of place, but Doherty's vocals are cringe-worthy throughout the entire number – and downright painful when he attempts to perform a scat solo.

This is followed by "Palace of Bone," a bizarre four-and-a-half-minute-long unintelligible rambling regarding, well, I'm not even sure.

"Sheepskin Tearaway" features Doherty's ex-girlfriend Dot Allison singing about a girl who falls in love with a reckless man "covered in scars and full of heroin." Oh, the irony.

He manages to turn it around, though, when it comes to the penultimate track "New Love Grows on Trees" – a heartbreakingly gorgeous ballad that captures the modern day Bohemian at his finest in a few years. *Grace/Wastelands* closes with "Lady Don't Fall Backwards," which paints a pretty picture of London filled with romanticized notions of "opium and tea" and flowers in the summer breeze.

The album should, in theory, be a masterpiece. The combination of Doherty, Coxon and Street brings together Britain's finest lyricist,

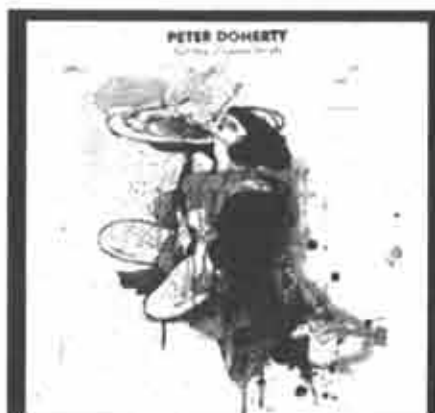
guitarist and producer. Unfortunately for record companies, Doherty's talent and charm lies in the relationship between the broken poet and his beat-up acoustic guitar, and their fondness for guerrilla gigs. He is primarily a storyteller, but since The Libertines dissolved, there seems to be a disjunction between the tales being told and the music behind them – a connection that is really only regained when Doherty is left alone to his own devices, without being surrounded by production teams and session musicians.

The album isn't exactly graceful, but it's not a complete wasteland, either. It's available in Canada on March 24, and streaming from Doherty's MySpace until then.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WASTER - Doherty is known for two things: hats and dating Kate Moss.



Peter Doherty
Grace/Wastelands
Label: Parlophone
Release Date: 22/03/2009
Rating: C



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Canada

Gómez's poems slam Laurier

Travelling slam poet Carlos Andrés Gómez gave a powerful and tear-jerking performance last Wednesday at the Turret

SHANNON BUSTA
STAFF WRITER

Where were you last Wednesday night? Perhaps getting your \$2.50 drink on at Phil's?

For the lucky 200-plus students and professors who were at the Turret last Wednesday night, there was much more than a cheap night of drinks offered. Rather, it was a mind-blowing, perspective-changing experience.

Thanks to Laurier's very own professor of sociology Dr. Jasmine Zine, last Wednesday saw the traditional feel of the Turret turned upside down from loud chaotic night club to a venue for intense passion, social awareness, creativity and honesty. With the help of three students, Carly Wardell, Randell Duguid and Eryn LeClare, as well as support from the Arts Student Advancement Program and the Laurier Students Public Interest Research Group, Dr. Zine introduced Laurier to a powerful and intense form of creative expression.

Carlos Andrés Gómez, a poet, actor, activist, brother, teacher and social worker, shared his humble and appreciative self with Laurier. Commonly referred to as a "slam poet," Gómez expresses his poetic

voice through the art of spoken word. Having toured at universities across North America, Europe, the Caribbean and Africa, Gómez is breathing life back into the lost art of spoken word.

This athletic man with a sensitive side shatters the stereotypes so often associated with artistic men. Doing so is a large part of what Gómez is trying to achieve on his multi-national university tour. Prior to his performance, Gómez led one of Dr. Zine's third-year sociology classes in a workshop designed to raise questions about the stereotypes, assumptions and the binaries that shape our society.

Would you classify yourself as white? Black? Male? Female? Gay? Straight? Good? Bad? Latino? Asian? Caucasian? These rigid social constructions are questioned by Gómez, who in turn encourages us to question the socially constructed binaries and assumptions that shape our day-to-day lives.

Despite having shared the stage with the likes of Mos Def, Wyclef Jean, Saul Williams and Immortal Technique, Gómez remains humble. Taken aback by one of Laurier's very own, the slam poet invited the talented Britta B to open up for him. The fourth-year arts student,

who informed me that she has been participating in the art of poetry since the age of four, blew away all expectations during her short performance. Speaking poetically about domestic violence, Britta B brought tears to the eyes of more than one audience member.

"I have such a passion for poetry and find it to be an imaginative, powerful form of communication," she shared after her performance, assuring me that she was not in the least bit nervous about speaking in front of such a large audience. "It's about a love for language," Britta B continued. "It gives you this experience of helping and encouraging others to share emotion."

After Britta B's performance, Gómez took the stage, encouraging the quiet audience to contribute to the performance. "Slam poetry is an interactive thing," he assured everyone before speaking out about genocide, sexism and issues of feminine self-esteem, racial stereotypes, politics and poverty. "If you hear something you like, let me know; clap, snap, yell out, whatever you're feeling," he continued. The audience ran with it.

There is something to be said about an art form that encourages one to reflect so deeply on one's



MYLES WILSON

GO GÓMEZ - The poet spoke on the construction of gender and race.

own role in solving social issues. In his poem "Distinctly Beautiful," Gómez condemns himself along with others for perpetuating the sexual objectification of women in western culture.

Honesty of this nature sent chills through my spine, and by the posi-

tive chatter that filled the Turret after a serious encore, it's safe to say that Gómez left a lasting impression on everyone present.

You can check out his live performances on Youtube or visit his Myspace page at myspace.com/carlosandresgomez.

Shocking culture at Turret

Culture Shock has modest turnout but still charms

DANIEL JOSEPH
A&E EDITOR

Wikipedia's entry on culture is appropriately long and at times confusing. It rightly states at the beginning that it is "difficult to define."

In many courses here at Laurier the word is debated at length - often resulting in the age-old "well, nobody really knows."

Adam Lawrence, co-ordinator of the Diversity Centre, said that, "I've been looking on every website to see if there is a consistent definition of the word and I can't. If somebody can, they deserve some kind of prize."

Last night, definitions aside, the Diversity Centre hosted *Culture Shock* - an event designed to showcase the diversity of Laurier - and the diversity that surrounds it.

He continues, "I always get so disheartened; when I do presentations in classes I always ask the class 'who has been to an [Association of Black Students] event, or a Women's Centre event?' And I hardly see any hands up and it drives me crazy. So we thought why not do something for Laurier culture and get as many groups as we can fit into an hour and a half, and do something that really celebrates this, and still gets out the message?"

Walking into the Turret last night it still felt like not everyone from Laurier had heard Lawrence's call (with around 70 in attendance) -

but those who did were certainly in the right place to enjoy a buffet of performances.

East Meets West started off the night with their collection of Indian performance and song coupled with a hint of Western pop culture.

The Rainbow Centre then wowed the audience with a drag performance of "Dreamgirls" and "Rolling on a River", complete with the backup singers "The Rainbow Brights."

The show continued with a performance arranged by Aboriginal Student Services - where the group explained its role in raising awareness about First Nations issues in Ontario, and the traumatic history of the residential school system in Canada. The performance involved traditional songs from tribes found in Ontario and British Columbia.

LSPIRG was represented by The Radical Choir, but took the time to highlight the multitude of services available to Laurier students. The choir then took the stage with their always lively showcase of activism songs, singing (What's so Funny 'Bout) Peace Love and Understanding."

This month's performance of *The Vagina Monologues* was represented and brought to the fore the issues of women and the work that the Women's Centre does to help students foster change. The audience was (rightfully so) sent into hysterics with a rendition of "My

Angry Vagina", a humorous rant on the injustices levelled against the vagina, such as tampons and doctor's visits.

The show took a different turn with a screening of the trailer for the 2003 documentary *Invisible Children*, encouraging students to join the LSPIRG working group of the same name and to attend an upcoming screening of the film.

The Association of black Students took the stage to explain their mission to promote culture, and provide a place for black students to address and work with ongoing issues of race and racism in today's world. Laurier poet Britta B then performed two poems - one of which she had just written backstage. Her flair for performance and comfort in front of large crowds was welcome, and her talent was certainly not to be questioned.

Laurier Musical Theatre then took the stage with - yes - a comical musical about Facebook.

Finally, to end the night, The Hawkstars came out, with a brief introduction and then a spirited performance.

As a showcase of the culture at Laurier, *Culture Shock* wildly succeeded - because as it wasn't just one type of culture on display but a multitude of them. While attendance wasn't the highest at *Culture Shock*, there is definitely room for expansion with more awareness and better marketing - something Lawrence firmly believes. He also, of course, promises more snacks next year.



NATASHA DILKIE

YOU KNOW ME - Britta B on stage at this year's *Culture Shock*.



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Semiotic zombies

Zombie-horror and semiological romp *Pontypool* is a Canadian filmmaking masterpiece, and a must-see for fans of horror

KEVIN HATCH
CORD A&E

As with many film genres, the psychological horror film is increasingly in danger of being driven into the proverbial ground under a staggering mountain of cliché and repetition, with frustratingly few alternatives to the same old spin on the same old story.

However, with *Pontypool*, Canadian independent director Bruce McDonald not only manages to breathe fresh life into an increasingly withering genre, but also to concoct a sliver of something altogether unexpected and new in the process. Adapted from screenwriter Tony Burgess' own novel about a small Ontario town overrun by zombies infected by a virus spread through the English language, McDonald's impressively lo-fi sheen proves the perfect fit for a zombie-horror film brave enough to engage in notions of semiotics (dismantling the English language and forms of verbal communication) and philosophical reflections on interpersonal communication and survival situation ethics, while somehow managing to remain darkly comedic in the process.

Yet, inherent complexities and offbeat humour aside, *Pontypool*

remains a gruesomely effective and taut piece of psychological horror, beautifully paced and peppered with chillingly detached bursts of visceral violence and gore, making it almost essential viewing for any horror film fan.

Taking notes from abiding genre classics such as *Alien*, McDonald keeps the viewer daringly in the dark throughout the film, offering only tantalizing snippets of information from outside news broadcasts to contextualize the viral outbreak and horror unfolding outside the secluded setting. This focalization alongside the protagonists serves not only to draw the viewer in further in terms of alignment with the characters, but perpetuates a noxious, continual sense of claustrophobia, amplifying the creeping terror to almost unbearable levels.

Far from balking at the challenge of keeping a single enclosed setting interesting, McDonald practically drinks in every last inch, managing to make the radio studio appear both oppressively tight and eerily vast - a masterful exploration of subjective relations to space. Similarly, Claude Fois's eerie dirge of a spectral musical score perfectly complements the film's crushingly atmospheric veneer.

And yet, McDonald refuses to let genre conventions stifle an impish sense of fun, as the film's grisly realism is counterbalanced by unexpected moments of irrelevant silliness (a man dressed up as Osama Bin Laden appears on Mazzy's radio show with no explanation given), tastefully melding the zombie-horror and black comedy genres to create a remarkably unprecedented result. And while the film may not be a flawless entry into the genre (Burgess's script offers the occasional wooden patch of dialogue, and the daringly ambiguous ending may not be for all tastes), such a unique spin on age-old narrative tropes deserves recognition and plaudits from all viewers capable of stomaching the material, both in terms of jarring violence and troublesomely complex thematic and philosophical overtones.

Being such a human-drama-centred piece, the low-budget and static location of McDonald's film may have started to fragment without the right cast, but thankfully the collection of (mostly) new actors prove more than up for the job. Perpetually underrated character actor Stephen McHattie shines in a rare lead role, giving a remarkably balanced performance as sardonic radio broadcaster Grant Mazzy.

Showcasing both a deliciously dry comedic deadpan and potential for raw, dramatic charisma, McHattie deftly carries both the light and dark aspects of the film with ease.

Lisa Houle gives an impressively measured performance as Mazzy's harried co-worker, managing to defy "damsel in distress" stereotypes by being a fully capable and independent individual, yet with an appealing vulnerability. Georgina Reilly gives a powerfully commanding presence in a far-too-brief role, similarly essaying a fully convincing human being forced to succumb to petrifying circumstances. And Hrnt Alianak is a delightfully bizarre presence as a quirky doctor who may or may not possess crucial information regarding the viral outbreak.

Easily worth seeing for its unconventional blending of the intellectually complex, chillingly horrifying and bleakly humorous, *Pontypool* achieves a cinematic gut punch, delivering a reaction unlike most of its contemporaries and certainly proving far more memorable.

While certainly not an appropriate initiation for those unfamiliar with zombie horror, the film's unique hybridity and visceral emotional effect is sure to both sate and fascinate fans of the genre, mak-

ing *Pontypool* near indispensable viewing.

Pontypool opens at the Original Princess Cinema on Friday, March 27 and will be shown in BA 101 tonight at 7 pm.



Pontypool

Director: Bruce McDonald
Starring: Stephen McHattie,
Lisa Houle, Georgina Reilly
Release Date: 27/03/2009
Rating: A

Not much fashion, lots of motion

Laurier's annual Fashion 'N Motion showcases more dance than fashion, but ultimately impresses *The Cord* and the audience

SHANNON BUSTA
STAFF WRITER

Laurier's Fashion 'N Motion (FnM) dance event saw its annual reprise last week with three nights of charitable creativity at the Theatre Auditorium. The opening night of "Split Second" on Thursday, March 19 saw a focus on diversity and inclusiveness, very fitting for the audience Laurier's student body.

The students themselves showed their appreciation by coming out in droves.

With a line up that extended all the way from the Theater Auditorium through the dining hall, up the stairs and into the senate chambers for the show's opening night, it is clear that Laurier students take notice when FnM rolls around.

The opening performance of "Split Second" started off on the shaky side. The first few dances were packed with creative energy and culturally inspired choreography that had the potential for greatness had the routines been a bit tighter. More than one dancer

missed steps and lost track of timing. Nevertheless, given the quality of the performances for the rest of the night, let's chalk the few early imperfections up to opening night jitters.

When asked if he thought the show was a success, Creative Director Curtis Tindale was positively ecstatic. "Success? Yes, the show this year was brought to a new level," he said. "We really tried to create an atmosphere of being inclusive and I feel that we did."

Every dance incorporated both male and female students of every shape, size, colour and background. FnM did a great job of representing the diversity that we should all be so proud of here at Laurier. The dances as a whole offered a diverse picture as well. The show's talented choreographers took the time to include a wide range of culturally specific dance techniques and styles.

The actual "fashion" aspect of the night received very little attention. The runway saw a measly ten minutes of action dedicated solely to fashion. Of course the attire of

the dancers was very fashionable, creative and dynamic, but it would have been nice to see a few more trips down the runway.

On the whole, *The Cord* agrees wholeheartedly with Tindale. The night was a smashing success. The house was packed, the energy was off the charts and the money raised for the Grand River Regional Cancer Centre will surely make a difference in the fight against cancer. "We hope to raise over \$10,000," said Charity Director Stephanie Blight after the show. Producing a performance that screams of fun and a love of dance and fashion is one thing; turning it into a massive fundraising event is something entirely different and completely worthy of praise.

Too often we underestimate the difference that a few driven individuals can really make; the organizers of FnM serve as a very flashy reminder of how much we all can do to help others, simply by giving some of our time and energy to a cause.



LYLA WILSON

KNEEL - Included in this year's FnM was an official knighting ceremony.

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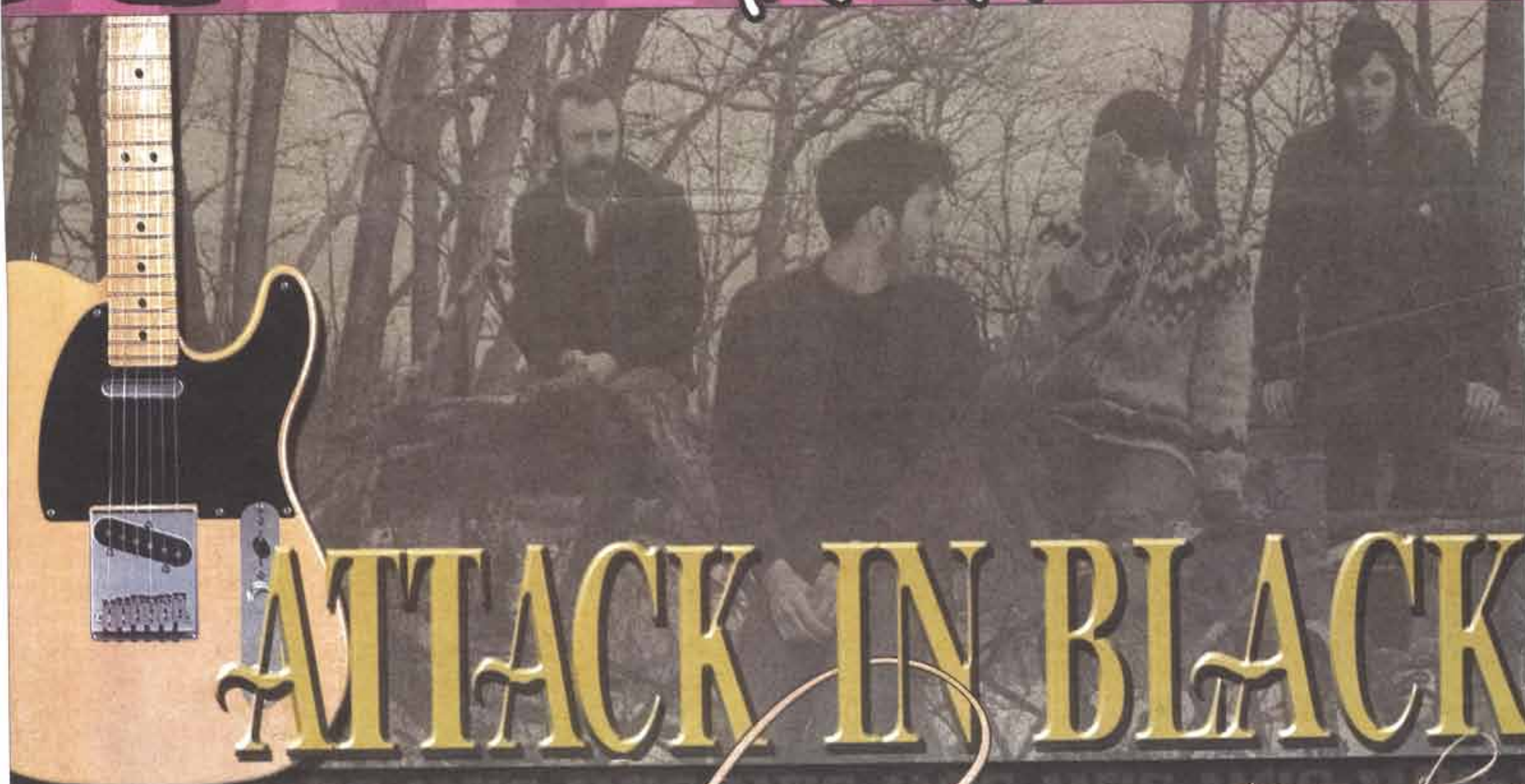
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